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Ollie's Hope
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ELAINE HOFFMAN BARUCH
Reconsidering Simone de Beauvoir

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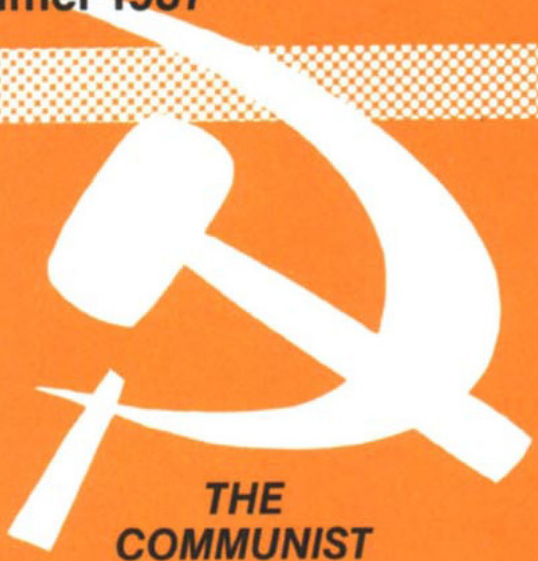
The Chimeras of 'Libertarianism'

WILLIAM ADAMS
'Platoon': Of Heroes and Demons

AN INTERVIEW WITH JAN KARSKI
The Mission that Failed



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COMMENTS AND OPINIONS
277
Charles Lane . . . Robert Delson

REPORT FROM ABROAD
284
BRAZIL—BETWEEN ROCK AND OCEAN *by Linda A. Rabben*

ARTICLES
287
SOVIET REFORMERS: FROM LENIN TO GORBACHEV
by Theodore Draper
302
THE CRAZE FOR PRIVATIZATION *by Robert Lekachman*
308
THE CHIMERAS OF "LIBERTARIANISM": WHAT'S BEHIND THIS POLITICAL MOVEMENT? *by Stephen L. Newman*
317
PUBLIC NEEDS AND PRIVATE WANTS
by Karl Frieden
326
THE MISSION THAT FAILED: AN INTERVIEW WITH JAN KARSKI
by Maciej Kozlowski
335
THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING ATOMIZED: HOW HUNGARIAN PEASANTS COPED WITH COLLECTIVIZATION *by Istvan Rev*
351
THE FEMALE BODY AND THE MALE MIND: RECONSIDERING SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR *by Elaine Hoffman Baruch*
359
A CASE FOR MARKET SOCIALISM: WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHY SHOULD WE FAVOR IT? *by David Miller and Saul Estrin*
368
PORTRAIT OF THE YOUNG LUKÁCS *by Mitchell Cohen*

COMMUNICATION
374
THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR REVISITED *by Benjamin Martin*

NOTEBOOK
377
Irving Howe . . . Louis F. Cooper . . . Emanuel Geltman

MOVIES
383
PLATOON: OF HEROES AND DEMONS *by William Adams*

IN THE MAGAZINES
387
Brian Morton and Peter Mandler

BOOK REVIEWS
390
Joseph Clark . . . Fred Block . . . David J. Garrow . . . David Rosner

LETTERS
399

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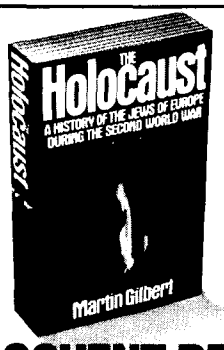

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Charles Lane

Ollie's Hope . . . and the Tower Commission

In Washington, the Tower Commission report has been analyzed mainly as an investigation of a policy. But there is another interesting way to view the report. Even though Ronald Reagan didn't request it, the commission didn't intend it, and the Washington opinion industry hasn't made very much of it, the report is also an investigation of a mentality. It is as the study of a mentality that this evidence is most damning, not only of the men involved, but of Ronald Reagan himself.

Whirl of Action, Rhetoric of Exhortation

IT IS HARD TO TELL WHICH OLIVER NORTH felt more strongly: the love of action or the fear of inaction. He rarely slept more than two or three hours per night. Yet despite his complaints of fatigue, he couldn't stop moving. He was forever presenting his superiors, McFarlane and Poindexter, with elaborate new plans. He was always pleading with them for permission to do more ("would love to carry the letter from RR"), often out of what seems to have been a deep, yet unfounded, anxiety about the costs of pausing. To him, these always outweighed the costs of pushing on. "Like you and Bud [McFarlane]," he wrote Poindexter in one especially instructive message from December 1985,

> I find the idea of bartering over the lives of these poor men repugnant. Nonetheless, I believe that we are . . . too far along with the Iranians to risk turning back now. If we do not at least make one more try at this point we stand a good chance of condemning some or all [of the hostages] to death and a renewed wave of Islamic jihad [sic] terrorism. While the risks of proceeding are significant, the risks of not trying one last time are even greater.

North had no evidence that the hostages were about to be executed, other than information from Israeli antiterrorism specialist Amiram Nir ("He doesn't sleep either," North observed), whose country had its own reasons for pushing the U.S. to keep shipping arms to Iran. As North himself remarked, "The threat to carry out sanctions against us has . . . not ever arisen." In fact, none of these three hostages was actually killed. To date, only one, Lebanon CIA station chief William Buckley, has died in captivity, and it is not clear whether or not he was killed by his captors.

Frenzied and unreflective though he may have been, it would be a mistake to regard North as an unthinking man. Rambos don't write. But North did, prolifically. Indeed, it would seem that whenever North was not running around the globe or juggling the various shell corporations that made up his grandiose "Project Democracy," he was tapping away at the keyboard of his word processor, producing plans, memos, and even personal missives for his colleagues on the National Security Council (NSC) staff. (And the Tower Commission, presumably, only published the juiciest ones.) The quality isn't bad, either; North seems to have been conscious of himself—accurately—as a character in a real-life spy novel. Almost instinctively, he kept the pot boiling in his writings:

> . . . you have now been informed that [the *contras*] safely released the eight West Germans this evening just before dark at the religious commune at Presillas. Franklin is headed North in attempt to get across the Rama Rd before the Sandinistas can close in on him. At this point the only liability we have is one of DEMOCRACY INC.'s airplanes is mired in the mud . . . on the secret field in Costa Rica. They hope to have it out by dawn.

North's actions, then, weren't mindless. But nor were they exactly mind*ful*. North flattered himself that he was a theorist. As he gazed at his computer terminal, North must have looked at his words and

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believed he was producing thought. In fact, however, he was producing pseudo thought.

And it was a particular brand of pseudo thought, the rhetoric of exhortation. The language of uplift. A North memo is characterized by a vocabulary of encouragement masquerading (to itself, too) as a vocabulary of analysis. With its abstract nouns and stock phrases, North's writings read like a kind of inter-office party pamphlet. This was in fact the common tongue of what amounted to a small cell of activist cadres: it's pretty clear from their memos that North's superiors were comfortable with this language, too. Writes McFarlane:

> Roger, Ollie . . . if the world only knew how many times you have kept a semblance of integrity and gumption to U.S. policy, they would make you Secretary of State. But they can't know and would complain if they did—such is the state of democracy in the late twentieth century.

Perhaps the most extraordinary passage of all is from North's note to McFarlane (who by then had resigned from the NSC staff, but continued on in a very active *ex officio* capacity) after a *contra* supply plane carrying Eugene Hasenfus was shot down in Nicaragua:

> We urgently need to find a high powered lawyer and benefactor who can raise a legal defense for Hassenfus [sic] in Managua. If we can find such persons we can not only hold Gene and Sally Hassenfus together (i.e., on our side, not pawns of the Sandinista propaganda machine) but can make some significant counter-attacking in the media. Obviously, there is the added benefit of being able to do something substantive in the legal system to defend this young man. I know that this is a tall order and that many U.S. lawyers will not want to step up to the task, but for the man (or woman) who steps up to this task, there will be a fair bite of history made in the next few weeks. There will, no doubt, be a show trial of some kind launched and unless we have an overt, competent legal defense, Hassenfus will become nothing but a tool in their hands . . .

North may have been capable of some hardline utterances in public—in his speeches to would-be *contra* contributors, say. But such a mood of conspiratorial righteousness, such a frank case for political manipulation, had to be reserved for fellow members of the "Project Democracy" vanguard.

BUT HOW DID THIS RHETORIC WORK? How, in practice, did it keep the operation alive? A central category of North's discourse is "hope." North asserts no fewer than fifteen times that—"hopefully," he "hopes," "God willing,"—there would soon be one kind of breakthrough or another in the White House's dealings with Iran. Sheer hope was central to the whole scheme.

But as the "God willing" suggests, it was hope in almost a religious sense, a hope that persisted in spite of ample evidence that the Iranians weren't about to fulfill his desire to see the hostages freed. North and the CIA knew that Manucher Ghorbanifar, the arms merchant whom the White House, at Israel's suggestion, used as a channel to the Iranian government, was a liar. They repeatedly talked about the possibility that they were being strung along by "rug merchants." Yet, often at North's insistence, they kept on. If you can believe in the cause in spite of what your senses tell you is really going on in the world of experience, then you really are a believer.

To cite just one example, the first direct U.S. arms sale to Iran—i.e., the first one that didn't involve the replenishment of Israeli stocks transferred to Iran—took place in February 1986. A thousand TOW antitank missiles went into Iran. On February 13, North wrote to Poindexter:

> Operation RESCUE is now under way. . . . If all goes according to plan, Lahad [an Israeli-sponsored militia leader in South Lebanon] will release 25 [pro-Iranian terrorists], hopefull [sic] on Friday. This wd [sic] keep our schedule for releasing the Americans on for Sunday, Feb. 23. Something to pray for at church that day.

The hostage release never materialized. Nor did the rest of the preposterous scenario that North, prompted by Ghorbanifar's fibs, had sketched—a scenario that included the Ayatollah Khomeini's resignation and subsequent high-level U.S.-Iranian talks on a new strategic relationship.

Ollie's hope, as he preached it, functioned to bolster his fellow NSC members' commitment to the operation. As he went about his covert business, he kept one eye on the historical mirror. When it was all over, there would be a medal for Richard Secord, a medal for Duane Clarridge, a Nobel Peace Prize for Ronald Reagan. Such promises, of course, carried the implicit threat of wimp status for anyone who hesitated. Thus North mongered guilt in his bosses, underscoring his own personal sacrifice, selfless dedication to the cause, and personal loyalty to his commanding officers at the NSC. For example, when North got wind of an apparent plan by Poindexter to reassign him (a few words about North's *contra* activities had leaked into the press) he sent Poindexter a long, maudlin memo ("I consider myself to have been blessed to have had the chance to so serve for as long as I did

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. . . "). "Now you are getting emotional again," Poindexter replied. "I cannot afford to let you go."

Roger, Ronnie

WHAT'S THE CONNECTION TO REAGAN HIMSELF? The Tower Commission's explanation for "What Was Wrong" (as one chapter heading puts it) boils down to the observation that Reagan was so uncomprehending of, and detached from, the inner workings of his own administration, that the operation escaped his control and ultimately went counter to his interests and those of the country. North & Co. kept the operation alive, and ultimately took it too far—to the point where it resulted in political disaster for the very man North thought he was serving. This implies that if Reagan had known more, things would have been done differently.

A better interpretation, however, is that the Iran-*contra* operation, however little Reagan knew about the details, was basically true to the president's own political style and conception of the role of government. North's hortatory rhetoric accurately captured and expressed Reagan's own mentality. Reagan, too, purveys the rhetoric of exhortation. For him, too, the practical consequence of optimism is to pursue his policies in plain disregard of the facts. In Reagan's world, as in North's, "optimism" means belief. As McFarlane told the Tower Commission: "The president was always very hopeful, optimistic . . . always looking for the bright side or the possibility that it could be salvaged." This mentality is *not* ruthless foreign policy realism, of which Reagan is often, and inaccurately, accused.

Rather, it is the mentality of crusade. And it has served to justify other areas of U.S. foreign policy under Reagan. Confronted by arguments that early deployment of the Star Wars nuclear missile defense system would violate the ABM Treaty with the Soviets, Reagan reportedly replied: "Why don't we just go ahead on the assumption that this is what we're doing and it's right?" We're doing it, therefore it's right. Not the other way around. And it's not only treaties Reagan feels mystically authorized to brush aside. It's opposing views, contradictory facts, and inconvenient laws, too. He relies instead on sheer ideological conviction.

And he relies on the men and women of action who put those beliefs into practice—the heroes. Acting more like a movement than a government, in an eerie echo of some of its enemies on the left, the Reagan Revolution has created its own pantheon of heroes and martyrs. They can be undercover types like Oliver North—Reagan has never retracted his description of North as "a national hero." Or, more frequently, they can be the people Reagan introduces during his State of the Union speeches—a Grenada invasion vet, an elderly mother who cares for the children of heroin addicts in the New York ghetto (to prove that the government doesn't have to). For Reagan, the government's job is to urge such heroes on, to sponsor the televised celebration of their deeds—whether it's Liberty Weekend, or a hostage welcome like that which North apparently envisioned. Meanwhile, of course, the chore of dealing with problems that affect ordinary people's lives, a job ordinarily and of necessity reserved for government employees, gets mostly scorn. Those rewarded must be volunteers who arrive in a pinch, people who overfulfill their quotas of altruism, never an unusually sensitive welfare caseworker, say, or even a particularly scrupulous vetter of defense contracts.

This is why there has never been, and probably never will be, any public disavowal of Ollie North by Ronald Reagan. A father does not betray his son. □

POSTSCRIPT ON THE HEARINGS, May 13, 1987: The first two weeks of hearings by the joint House-Senate committee on the Iran-*contra* affair have produced further evidence of how broadly the North mentality was shared in the administration (and on its fringes), and have amplified the version of that mentality which emerged from the Tower Commission report. Now we have a better idea of the mixed intellectual sources from which this mind-set originates—neoconservative pessimism, military doctrine about covert activity, and, ultimately, the bitter reality of defeat in Vietnam.

Testimony by Robert McFarlane, the former national security adviser, shed new light on his lament abut the "state of democracy in the late twentieth century." That notion seems to represent McFarlane's distillation of a whole current of "decline of the West" thinking so popular among neoconservative intellectuals as an explanation for American failures in Vietnam and elsewhere. As McFarlane explained his version of this view to the committee, the American demos is chronically indisposed to support risky (or nasty) foreign policy operations that the global struggle with the Soviets often requires. This lack of public will is reflected in stalemate and lack of consensus in Washington. All McFarlane would suggest publicly as a remedy for this crisis of will was tighter parliamentary discipline in Congress and more education about

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policy of deeper involvement—a secret policy that violated both the law and constitutional norms and, by stirring even greater congressional and public hostility to the *contra* policy, may have endangered the *contras* far more than anything the supposedly spineless American democracy ever did. □

Robert Delson

A Path to Disarmament

The bilateral and multilateral negotiations to reduce the arsenals of death do not give much ground for hope. Reykjavik and its aftermath are a slender thread on which to hang the framework of peace.

The best that can be anticipated even if the tentative strategic weapons agreement is consummated, is a 25-percent reduction in the strategic forces in the first five-year period of the "ten-year millennium"—if, that is, the superpowers can agree on a Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) formula. (The 25-percent estimate, rather than the commonly accepted one of 50 percent, is put forward in a careful analysis by Jack Mendelsohn in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, December 1986.) This will still require the parties to surmount their obsession with achieving parity in reductions, with respect not only to the major categories of strategic weapons, but also the numerous sublimits within each category. This obsession persists, despite the judgment of former Ambassador George Kennan and other serious thinkers that parity is an unattainable and unnecessary goal. Thus, before Secretary of State George Shultz departed for Moscow on April 12, President Reagan refused to accept the secretary's suggestion that the U.S. drop its insistence that the Russians eliminate long-range mobile missiles in which they have an advantage.

The only hopeful note is the Soviet acceptance of the proposal initially made by the United States for the removal from Europe of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF), subject to each retaining a hundred missiles outside of Europe. This possibility is clouded, however, by a series of conditions the U.S. has put forward, including the right to match the 130 short-range missiles now deployed by the Soviet Union, a strict medium-range verification package, and the elimination of the one hundred missiles each was to retain outside Europe.

Unilateral Initiatives Needed

I PROPOSE A PUBLIC CAMPAIGN to demand that the superpowers undertake annual unilateral reciprocal reductions over a ten-year period, until a minimum deterrent level is reached. Both powers would be asked to continuously and unilaterally reciprocate each other's reductions, based on an original initiative by one of them. If they did not do so, public pressure could prod them to make more rapid progress toward a bilateral agreement, based on their apprehension that otherwise, massive public agitation would push them further.

Unilateral initiatives would be the next logical step after the Freeze and should have an even broader appeal since they represent a far more significant step toward arms reduction.

Unilateral reciprocated initiatives, a concept most explicitly advanced by Charles Osgood,[1] has recently been revived in *The Report of the U.N. Secretary General on Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament Measures*,[2] a document almost completely neglected by the press.

I believe that none of the other writers who have made proposals similar to mine has explicitly spelled out the terms as I have in a longer paper on the subject.[3]

My proposal is premised on the widely held opinion that the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers contain far more weapons than necessary for deterrence. (I assume here that deterrence may be effective in the short run, although I have doubts about this, see below.) Deterrence requires only a minimum deterrent level capable of surviving a first strike, and sufficient for retaliation but not for a first strike (which would serve only to launch the aggression both sides have renounced). A deterrent level would consist of perhaps a few hundred strategic weapons, or at the most, 10 percent of the cur-

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rent level. This position has been espoused by former Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.[4]

The Unilateral Rationale

THERE ARE MANY REASONS why such an initiative could prove more effective than bilateral negotiations.

1. *Reduction of Tensions.* The key to achieving deep cuts is through the reduction of superpower tensions. Unilateral reciprocated initiatives would start a long process of such reductions and should be launched even before mutual hostility has been diminished, rather than waiting for reductions of tension.

Unilateral measures, no matter how small, and how well within the reasonable limits of the security of the initiating power, are the best way to reduce tensions and create an atmosphere in which more substantial initiatives can be pursued. The fact that the reductions could start on a small scale, which no one could reasonably suppose to jeopardize national security, means that they are likely to be politically acceptable to large sectors of the population. Charles Osgood sets forth the details of his approach in three sets of rules, two of which are of particular interest:

> Rule 1: Unilateral initiatives must not reduce one's capacity to inflict unacceptable nuclear retaliation should one be attacked at that level.
>
> Rule 3: Unilateral initiatives must be graduated in risk according to the degree of reciprocation obtained from an opponent.[5]

2. *Avoiding Many Difficulties of Bilateral Negotiations.* George W. Rathjens, professor of political science at MIT, and a former deputy director of the Defense Department's Advanced Research Project Agency, has views that closely parallel the Osgood approach.[6]

Rathjens indicates a number of areas in which negotiated agreements present difficulties. In the search by governments for bargaining chips in negotiations that take place over a period of years, new and unnecessary military programs are created, which become politically impossible to abandon. Concessions may have to be made to the military establishment to secure their support for a treaty, because agreements based on symmetry in posture and obligations are easier to negotiate and defend than those that permit advantages to either side. Bilateral agreements also increase the scale of verification which the two sides believe they must require, and reluctance to permit such verification substantially limits what can be achieved through formal negotiated agreements. Consequently, little effective arms control and much less disarmament is likely to result from negotiated efforts.

Unilateral measures and bilateral negotiations could be pursued simultaneously, and unilateral initiatives could stimulate the pace of negotiations by the force of example.

Even if the nuclear arsenals were substantially reduced without full parity, deterrence would not be threatened since nuclear weapons are far less significant in maintaining deterrence than is generally assumed. One of the many doubts about the effectiveness of deterrence based on nuclear weapons is its lack of credibility in deterring a first strike, since retaliation would serve no purpose other than the irrational one of a pure act of revenge. Neither nuclear retaliation nor the natural aversion to taking responsibility for a first strike that could destroy all humanity, is likely to be effective in the long run unless measures have been taken to reduce tensions and to create the atmosphere for constructive relationships between the superpowers ("constructive engagement").

In fact, the more fundamental restraint against the first use of nuclear arms is the shared knowledge of the incalculable consequences to both aggressor and victim, including the danger of nuclear winter. Both sides share an almost irreversible aversion to assuming the responsibility for initiating such horrors. This would be true even if the effects were limited to the adversary and its people, since the leaders of both powers remain human beings, whatever their political creeds or crimes. They would also be restrained by the measureless opprobrium they would bear, and the monstrous nature of the world they would inherit.

The leader of neither superpower has yet reached a state of mind in which his dominant thoughts would be, in the words of Admiral Noel Gayler:

> . . . to regard the people he was about to incinerate as somehow less than human. They would have to be demonized, stripped of their human attributes.
>
> To get into this frame of mind requires long-term attitude building. We are engaged, we and the Soviets, in building such attitudes right now. We do so at our peril. We must both reverse this process.[7]

Thus, whether the arsenals of the potential victim were adequate for retaliation would not be the sole or dominant reason for restraint, so that even deep reductions in the arsenals would not substantially diminish the restraints on the initiation of nuclear war.

But even those who believe that the nuclear component of deterrence is indispensable must

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ultimately concede that its effectiveness is not dependent on maintaining the *present* level of weapons, nor even on the continued existence of any nuclear weapons. This follows from one of the principal arguments urged by those who oppose abolition of nuclear weapons—namely, that the knowledge of how to recreate them will not be lost with their destruction. Thus, the threat of a revival of nuclear arms would be as fearful a deterrent as their actual presence.

As Jonathan Schell has observed, the destruction of nuclear arms would therefore bring the incalculable advantage that we might avoid the nuclear holocaust because only the peril of extinction by the recreation of nuclear weapons would be available as a deterrent, and not the arms themselves.[8]

The actual practice of both superpowers, as evidenced in their interpretation of their professed "goal of strategic stability," is not one that opponents of nuclear war can accept, even if there is some progress toward disarmament. The fundamental fallacy of both sides, and the world's tragedy, lies in their delusion that reliance on nuclear weapons is, and will continue to be, the principal component of preserving the peace. Instead of seeking "the goal of strategic stability," based on an equilibrium of strategic weapons, we must try to achieve massive cuts and, ultimately, to abolish nuclear weapons and substitute for them the quest for constructive engagement. This goal will at least seek to lock the superpowers in a relationship so mutually beneficial that they will have no incentive to abandon it for mutual suicide.

The superpowers have already taken impressive unilateral measures that evoked reciprocal responses. The Secretary General's *Report* states:

> The tripartite moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests of 1958-1961 is a well-known case. The suspension of nuclear weapon testing late in 1958 by the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States was triggered by the unilateral decision of the Soviet Union on 31 March 1958 to stop nuclear testing.
>
> A further step to the conclusion of the Partial Test Ban Treaty was the United States initiative of 10 June 1963 to halt nuclear tests in the atmosphere. . . . In purely military terms, the nuclear test moratorium may have been disadvantageous to the United States, but in no way impaired its military capacity; it was such as to be perceived by the other side as reducing an external threat; it was so designed and conveyed to the other side as to emphasize a sincere intent to reduce tensions and invite reciprocation; it was publicly announced and widely publicized; and it did not demand prior commitment to reciprocation by the other side as a condition for the execution of the unilateral initiative.[9]

Unfortunately, the latest illustration of a unilateral initiative, the Soviet Union's moratorium on nuclear testing, did not evoke a reciprocal response by the U.S. It is time to move beyond the Freeze, into the more positive role of actual reductions in nuclear weapons by a bold unilateral initiative. Support of such an initiative presents a challenge to all who understand that overkill in the arsenals serves no purpose except to permit a first strike, and that it is a growing danger whose elimination can create no danger but only a hope for peace. □

The author expresses thanks to Dr. Harold Feiveson for his suggestions during the drafting of this paper.

Notes

[1]Charles Osgood, *An Alternative to War or Surrender* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1962).

[2]New York: United Nations, 1985.

[3]Robert Delson, "Unilateral Graduated Reciprocated Nuclear Disarmament by the Superpowers to the Minimum Deterrent Level," available from the author at 605 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10158.

There is a considerable body of support for Osgood's GRIT (Graduated Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension Reduction) approach to deep reduction among a number of outstanding thinkers including George W. Rathjens (work cited in footnote 6), Richard Garwin, "Political/Military Imperatives," speech at the Symposium on Military and Political Aspects of Nuclear Arms, October 17, 1984 (37th Public Relations Society of America, National Conference), Eric Fromm, "The Case for Unilateral Disarmament," in *Daedalus*, Fall 1960, Special Issue: Arms Control, p. 1017, Ambassador Rikhi Jaipal, personal communication summarized in my longer paper mentioned above, Sydney D. Bailey, "Unilateral Disarmament Initiatives: Risks Worth Taking," p. 310, in *Before It's Too Late. The Challenge of Nuclear Disarmament*, ed. P. Abrecht & Ninan Koshy, 1983.

[4]*Blundering Into Disaster* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

[5]Charles Osgood, "GRIT: A Strategy for Survival in Mankind's Nuclear Age," p. 165 in *New Directions in Disarmament*, edited by Epstein and Feld (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1981).

[6]George W. Rathjens, "Unilateral Initiatives for Limiting and Reducing Arms," page 173 in *New Directions in Disarmament*, edited by Epstein and Feld.

[7]Admiral Noel Gayler, *The Way Out—A General Nuclear Settlement*, American Committee on East-West Accord, Washington, D.C., January 1984.

[8]Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), p. 233.

[9]Secretary General's Report, p. 8.

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Linda A. Rabben

Brazil—Between Rock and Ocean

At the end of the Copacabana beach in Rio stands a huge rock called the Morro do Leme. Slowly but remorselessly, the tides are turning the rock into sand. If we measure human change by this standard, Brazil's 486-year history as colony and nation seems very short indeed, and the past few years mean almost nothing, just enough time for a few grains of sand to precipitate.

In 1984 Brazil's congress elected the country's first civilian president in twenty-two years, an event hailed as proof of "redemocratization." Has Brazil indeed become a democracy? If you consider a democracy to be a polity where there are free and fair elections, a functioning legislature, an independent judiciary, and complete freedom of speech, press, and religion, then the answer has to be "No, not yet." By these criteria, Brazil never has been a democracy.

For North Americans, Brazil gains attention only when it seems that it might not pay its international debts. Then a few articles appear in the *Wall Street Journal*, Brazil reaches a compromise with the lenders, and this vast country of 130 million people disappears again into the shadows of our ignorance.

But in Brazil itself significant events occur. The minister of justice unilaterally assumes the role of chief censor; 12,000 landless farm families camp out by the sides of highways protesting the slowness of the government's agrarian-reform program; the federal government imports thousands of tons of radioactive beef and milk from Europe to break resistance to its economic reforms—and one more day passes without congress managing to pass a law. Now run by civilians instead of generals, the government continues to implement policies that no lawmaking body has ever approved. This may go on for years, since the congress elected last November is busy writing a new constitution.

Still, the country has a far freer political atmosphere now than during the years of the military regime, which Brazilians refer to as *aquele sufoco* —the suffocating epoch from 1964 to 1985. Political opponents no longer disappear, the press is free of censorship, direct elections have taken place, voluntary associations and pressure groups are springing up.

THE CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL system reappeared out of the dictatorship's ruins, and many old politicians tried to reestablish their old domains. Tancredo Neves, who won the presidency in 1984 but died before he could take office, had been Brazil's prime minister in 1962, when the army and its allies introduced a parliamentary system to dilute the power of President João Goulart, whom they overthrew in 1964. José Sarney, who became president at Neves's death, had been the leader of the military government's tame political party before switching to the opposition in 1984. The strongest opposition leaders have familiar faces, too. In 1982 Leonel Brizola, Goulart's brother-in-law, who spent years in exile, won the governorship of Rio de Janeiro state; Janio Quadros, president before Goulart, became mayor of São Paulo in 1985.

Along with this apparent reprise of Brazil's old-fashioned populism has come considerable disenchantment. In talking to Brazilians, I found only one (who works for a political party) who did not express contempt for politicians. The old faces, the old promises do not seem to inspire confidence. People say they vote in protest or disgust. The 1986

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election campaign was marked more by accusations of corruption than by discussion of issues. All the candidates seemed to be making the same promises.

Many of these promises cannot be kept because of Brazil's federal system, in which the central government controls most appropriations to local authorities. Without federal money, state and municipal governments have few resources. The preponderance of the poor (at least 50 percent of the population, much more in the chronically depressed and crowded Northeast) also narrows the local tax base. Corruption eats away at the rest.

Extravagant promises are a traditional feature of populist politics in Brazil. People complain that candidates show up in their neighborhoods right before the election, finally delivering some of the sewers, pavements, and electricity lines they promised four years before. Politicians are also famous for attending funerals and erecting billboards emblazoned with their names in front of any public-works projects they sponsor. Huey Long would feel at home here.

If this kind of politics no longer inspires enthusiasm, hope did flash through the population in 1984, when huge demonstrations supported direct presidential elections. Although these rallies, the biggest in Brazil's history, did not achieve their objective—the presidential election took place in the congress—they did ensure Tancredo Neves's victory. Confronted by millions of peaceful demonstrators, the military did not feel free to impose its unpopular candidate on the country.

Neves's death moved Brazil to tears. He has become a martyr of democratization, despite the unlikelihood that he could have fulfilled the extravagant hopes of the public. And the military has stepped backstage, where it continues to wield considerable influence. An amnesty has guaranteed that the leaders of the dictatorship and its torturers will not be prosecuted en masse. The National Information Service (Brazil's CIA) "advises" the president. Civilian government in Brazil is still provisional and authoritarian, governing by the past dictatorship's or its own decrees.

A LONG TRADITION OF BYZANTINE maneuvers and secret deals has survived the change in government. Veteran politicians seem more concerned with guaranteeing their future power than with writing the new Constitution. Public interest in the shaping of the document has given way to speculation about presidential succession. The constitutional assembly has become a mere backdrop for elite-politics-as-usual.

Before the constitutional delegates were elected in November 1986, a presidential commission presented a long list of suggested changes in the constitution. Among them is an explicit prohibition of military involvement in politics. But how effective can a new constitution be in guaranteeing democracy and preventing military takeovers? Brazil's earlier constitutions were little more than statements of unattainable ideals. The current one states, for example, that education is compulsory until age fourteen, but most Brazilians quit school before age twelve. It mandates "respect for the physical and moral integrity of prisoners," but the state tortured political suspects for years and continues to torture common prisoners. Lack of resources, the state's own manipulation of the law, and a bloated bureaucracy have led Brazilians to distrust the institutions of government as well as those who run them.

DEMOCRACY COMES FROM THE PEOPLE, not from the state. Thousands of local voluntary associations, newly established independent trade unions, lay religious groups, the landless who camp by the highways: all are trying to exercise a different kind of political power. They remain outside the conventional political system, and so their accomplishments cannot be gauged by laws and policies. They seem unsure of how to gain political leverage without becoming contaminated by political com-

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promise and corruption. But they are creating something relatively new in Brazilian society: grassroots organizations that work to change the lives of their own communities. Some of these groups have moved closer to new political parties in hopes of influencing power centers. But the new parties are themselves weak; some seem afraid of actually winning.

The prime example of this ambivalence is the Workers Party (PT). It began in 1980 as an offshoot of independent trade unions that were beginning to make gains in the industrialized states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais. (Brazil's official unions had been government-controlled since the 1940s.) A coalition of workers, unionists, progressive church people, and intellectuals, the PT has become a genuine representative of Brazil's working classes, winning few elections but mainly serving as a kind of conscience for the political system. Too much success might weaken its peculiar power. Led by an outspoken unionist nicknamed Lula (Luis Inácio da Silva), the PT has gained plenty of national attention. It has also become an easy target for establishment politicians.

In July 1986 the PT became involved in a strike of migrant farmworkers that turned violent. Two bystanders died when troops apparently fired into rock-throwing crowds. The minister of justice and the federal police chief immediately blamed the PT for the deaths, citing testimony (later withdrawn) that the first shots had come from a car carrying PT officials. Lula countercharged that the government was looking for an excuse to declare the PT illegal. Later, when the PT threatened to sue the government officials for slander, the officials backed off. An official investigation exonerated the PT just before the November elections, but this news was buried on the back pages. The incident showed how vulnerable the PT is to such attacks, especially when the media give the government the headlines. Since that time, the government has blamed every public disturbance and illegal strike either on the PT or the CUT, the trade-union central organization. This is all typical of Brazil's tough and dirty political game. No wonder, then, that grassroots organizations are reluctant to get involved politically, even though they realize that politics is where the power lies.

The grassroots religious groups (CEBs) try to organize the poor in order to pressure local authorities to provide public services. They also act as consciousness-raising groups for people who have never before been able to act politically. The vocation of civic activist is new in Brazil. Future grassroots leaders are getting their political education by discussing liberation theology in Bible-study groups. Many of the leaders of the national Landless Farmworkers Movement began their political careers in the CEBs. The same is true of PT activists and other community leaders. They all represent a new kind of leadership in a country whose leaders have traditionally come from the upper classes.

On a visit to an encampment of landless farmworkers in southern Brazil, I met Miguel Sávio, a rural union president who had been shot four times two months earlier by an unknown gunman, probably hired by a local landowner. Sávio was back at work, protected twenty-four hours a day by coworkers. At the end of our conversation, he said he was honored to have foreign visitors with "such a high level of education." It was I who felt honored to meet someone who risks his life working for agrarian reform, I said. "But I'm sure you'd do the same if you were in this situation," he replied. I doubted that I would have so much courage.

Miguel Sávio's influence may not travel beyond the limits of the small town where he lives and works. Repeated thousands of times, however, his example can make at least as much difference as the speeches of politicians.

Eventually the ocean does turn the rock into sand. □

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Theodore Draper

Soviet Reformers: From Lenin to Gorbachev

The past—to use a phrase of Marx—"weighs like a nightmare" on the Soviet Union of Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev. He is not the first Soviet leader to attempt to escape from the nightmare of Stalinism in order to make a radical change in how the Soviet Union functions. To understand the present effort, it is useful to look back historically at other such "reform" periods in Soviet history for what they can tell us about the general problem.

For this purpose, it is best to start with a brief view of Soviet history since the end of 1917. That history can be divided into five main periods, with a sixth now in progress.

- First, there was War Communism for about three years, from 1918 to 1920.
- Second, the first reform period of the New Economic Policy or NEP for about seven years, from 1921 to 1928.
- Third, the Stalinist period of about twenty-five years, from 1928 or 1929 to 1953.
- Fourth, after a brief interregnum or struggle for the succession, the second reform period, under Nikita Khrushchev, for about eight or nine years, from 1955 or 1956 to 1964.
- Fifth, the reaction, headed by Leonid Brezhnev, for eighteen years, from 1964 to 1982.
- Sixth, after another interregnum, headed by Andropov and Chernenko, the third reform period, inaugurated by Gorbachev in March 1985.

One thing may be noted immediately. The two full reform periods of the NEP and Khrushchev lasted from beginning to end for less than ten years. The periods that followed them, headed by Stalin and Brezhnev, lasted much longer, from eighteen to twenty-five years. In effect, the past reform periods did not succeed in making themselves irreversible; in fact, they were rather easily reversed and for lengthy periods.

Lenin

THE PROTOTYPE OF THE SPECIES is the first one—the New Economic Policy or NEP. It is particularly important at present because it has been a source of both inspiration and legitimacy for what Gorbachev is trying to do.

A key reason for the preeminence of the NEP period is that it is irrevocably linked with the name of Lenin. He introduced it in March 1921, defended it to his last breath, and died in January 1924, while the NEP was still untouchable.

Inasmuch as subsequent reform leaders have specialized in repudiating Stalin, they would be ideologically naked if they did not claim to go back to the pristine communism of Lenin. In fact, some of the questions and answers have changed so little that they too go back to the NEP. This return to a NEP-type reform is particularly characteristic of the unfolding Gorbachev period; Gorbachev himself has invoked the precedent of the NEP, as if it gave him a license to do what he wants to do. Thus we are not straying too far from the present in paying special attention to the NEP period. NEP-thinking is imbedded in the present.

There is a second important reason for taking another look at the NEP. Most of the current attention to the NEP is almost wholly concentrated on its economic aspect. It also had, however, a political side of even greater long-term significance.

The NEP was adopted for a reason that is similar to that of subsequent reform periods, namely, the country was faced with some sort

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of crisis. In the case of the NEP, the crisis went back to the previous period of War Communism.

The economic system of War Communism was, as Lenin put it, "a direct transition from the old Russian economy to state production and distribution on communist lines."[1] It was, in effect, pure communism, with no outlet for private initiative and the profit motive. At the root of the crisis was the refusal of the peasantry to produce a surplus to feed the rest of the population. The peasants went on strike, because anything they produced beyond their own needs was subject to confiscation. Moreover, there was little or nothing for peasants and workers to buy, even if they produced a surplus, because large-scale and small-scale production had almost completely broken down.

The crisis was so acute that "the revolution," as Lenin put it, "is on the brink of a precipice which all previous revolutions reached and recoiled from."[2] The precipice was marked by famine, drought, large-scale banditry, peasant revolt, abandonment of the factories and, finally, the Kronstadt rebellion, which was put down bloodily at the very time the NEP was being introduced. The economics of War Communism was not the only cause of the crisis; the country had gone through three years of civil war and foreign intervention. By 1921, however, the civil war and foreign intervention had been overcome, and something still had to be done about War Communism.

The NEP was Lenin's strategy for withdrawing from the precipice to safer ground. It began with a reform of agrarian policy. Confiscation was abolished and a "tax in kind" substituted. The peasant could now produce as much as he liked; the surplus was subject to a small tax in kind; after paying the tax, he could sell the surplus for as much as the market would bear and take the profit for himself.

This shift in agrarian policy was the foundation of the NEP. Other innovations, such as joint enterprises between the Soviet state and foreign businesses, were introduced later. Throughout the NEP period, however, freedom to trade was limited to small-scale producers and the state retained a monopoly of large-scale or heavy industry. Towards the end of his life, Lenin came to believe that the basic solution to the economic problem lay in the organization of cooperatives, but the culture of the people, he complained, was so low that it would take "a whole historical epoch" for a cooperative economy to take hold in the entire country.[3]

We may call the NEP "reformist," because that is just the word used by Lenin for it.[4] He also called it other things that reveal what its practical function was intended to be—a "respite," an interval of time "in which the old and worn-out forces can 'recuperate,' " a partial reversion to "capitalism," a "flanking movement," a "retreat to a form of state capitalism, to concessions, retreat to trade," a "breathing space," and a product of "sheer necessity." Lenin's "reformism" was a tactical retreat to enable the Soviet regime to go on the offensive again at a later time when the "reform" had exhausted its usefulness. Lenin himself put it this way: "We are retreating, going back, as it were; but we are doing so in order, after first retreating, to take a running start and make a bigger leap forward."[5]

The NEP period was foreseen by Lenin as quite long, sometimes very long, though on this point he was not altogether consistent. He once said that the NEP would have to last "for a long time, but, of course, as has been correctly noted, not forever." He also mentioned that the NEP would give way to the new, fully communist society "twenty years earlier or twenty years later," as if the time factor did not matter. Still later, he said that catching up with capitalist countries would take only "several years." And he foresaw that putting the entire population into cooperatives would take "a whole historical epoch."[6]

Economically, the NEP did serve its immediate purpose. It rescued the Soviet regime from the danger of possible disintegration and collapse. The peasantry soon began to produce surpluses of grain and food. The famine was relieved after only one year of the NEP. By 1925, agricultural production had approached the prewar level.

BUT, AS I HAVE NOTED, the NEP also had a political side to it. If the victory of Stalin in 1928-1929, which brought about the demise of

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the NEP, is to be understood, Lenin's NEP-inspired politics was a significant contributing factor. The political NEP was far from being a democratic "reform"; in fact, it was just the opposite.

The monolithic Soviet party-state was not born in 1917; opposition groups and parties continued to exist for some time inside and outside the main Bolshevik party. Inside the party, a "Left Communist" faction, whose main spokesman was Bukharin (later to go over to the other extreme), had sprung up in 1918 but did not outlast that year. By 1920, two more serious Communist opposition groups had arisen—the "Workers' Opposition," made up mainly of trade unionists, and the "Democratic Centralists," mainly intellectuals. The former was critical of War Communism as a reflection of widespread working-class discontent, the latter was primarily interested in greater democracy within the party.

The monolithic party was officially ordained in March 1921 at the same time as the NEP—and both at the behest of Lenin. A resolution on "party unity" denounced these two groups as "syndicalist and anarchist deviations" that were incompatible with party membership. The effect was to make official a policy of banning opposition groups or tendencies at least in principle, though it did little to inhibit the factional struggles later in the decade. The ultimate beneficiary was Stalin, who succeeded in imposing his own type of "party unity" prescribed by Lenin.

Lenin had little difficulty getting the better of opposition within the party, but the other two parties still functioning, if against increasing repression—the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks—were more formidable obstacles in the way of the monolithic party-state. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries drew their support mainly from the peasantry; not so long ago they had been allies of the Bolsheviks and had even collaborated in the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in January 1918. The Mensheviks were largely urban and particularly influential in the surviving trade unions, where they had more proletarian backing than the Bolsheviks. Both had long criticized War Communism as unnecessarily extremist and self-destructive.

Now the NEP appeared to justify their opposition to War Communism and put the Bolsheviks on the defensive as having belatedly agreed with them. Thus Lenin was faced with an acute political as well as an economic crisis after the Tenth Congress. Lenin's tactics were brutal in the extreme. He denounced the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks as pure and simple counterrevolutionaries, mainly because they had dared to criticize War Communism prematurely and were likely to benefit from his late conversion. "All the White Guards, headed by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries," he said, "wax jubilant and say, 'Aha, you are retreating!' "[7] This crime brought out the most bloodthirsty language from Lenin. Because the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries were allegedly saying, "The revolution has gone too far. What you [Bolsheviks] are saying now we have been saying all the time, permit us to say it again," Lenin replied: "Permit us to put you before a firing squad for saying that."[8] He also spoke of using machine guns against the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries for their crime of saying: "You say you are retreating towards capitalism, and we say the same thing; we agree with you!"[9]

Thus there were two faces to the NEP—one opened the Soviet regime to temporary, limited economic experiments of a quasi-capitalist nature, the other imposed a full totalitarian, monolithic political order by officially wiping out all types and degrees of political opposition or driving it underground. By 1922, little or nothing remained of opposition in or out of the party. And it was in that year that Stalin became general secretary of the party and systematically put his henchmen in key posts in the party apparatus, an advantage that stood him in good stead during the internal party struggle later in the decade.

Stalin owed his victory, at least in part, to the political system Lenin had put in place beginning in March 1921. Lenin legitimated the monolithic party with a monopoly of power in the country, and Stalin took the next step of giving himself a monopoly of power in the party and, through it, in the country. In this

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respect, the political side of the NEP—the elimination of all political opposition—was a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for the rise of Stalinism, whether or not Lenin himself would have gone all the way down the same road if he had lived long enough.

Two years later, after Lenin's final stroke, his so-called Testament called for the removal of Stalin as general secretary on the ground that Stalin was "too rude" for the job, but it was too late.* Rudeness was not one of the most damaging charges in Bolshevik circles, which were not without a tradition of political rudeness, including that of Lenin himself. When the Testament was revealed to members of the Central Committee some months after Lenin's death, the proposal to remove Stalin was turned down with the help even of some, such as Zinoviev, who at that time were considered particularly close to Lenin and were later to live to regret their lack of foresight—and to die for it.[10]

As for the still hotly debated question of how much Lenin's legacy was responsible for Stalin's ultimate power, my own belief is that there are two types of errors to avoid—that Lenin had everything to do with it and that he had nothing to do with it. Without Lenin's imposition of a one-party totalitarian state, there is some chance that Stalin's imposition of a personal dictatorship through a Stalinized party might have been avoided—or at least made far more difficult. This does not mean that Lenin if he had lived long enough would necessarily have been indistinguishable from Stalin. In fact, it is hard to see that any other Bolshevik leader of the 1920s would necessarily have been indistinguishable from Stalin, but that does not absolve them of all responsibility for Stalin's ascendancy. Politically, Lenin's decision in 1921 to suppress all opposition was bad enough in its consequences without going so far as what Stalin did with it.

The social basis of Stalinism was largely, if inadvertantly, brought about by Lenin. He was almost singlehandedly responsible for the decision to go ahead with the seizure of power by reversing the Marxist sequence of revolution—to take power in the name Communism or Socialism and create the social and economic conditions necessary for it afterwards. Once this move was successfully made, he let loose a social upheaval that increasingly went out of control. Lenin himself had finally reached a stage of disorientation by resorting to the Napoleonic maxim: "*On s'engage et puis . . . on voit,*" which he freely translated as "First engage in a serious battle and then see what happens."[11] Improvisation was substituted for principle. Stalin took Lenin at his word that the NEP could not go on forever or even for very long and imposed the order of a concentration camp and extermination chamber on the increasingly recalcitrant Soviet reality. If the Soviet Union had not been driven to make good on Lenin's miscalculations, of which not the least was his expectation that a European revo-

*This complaint about Stalin's "rudeness" refers at least in part to a telephone conversation during which Stalin spoke insultingly to Krupskaya, Lenin's wife. Lenin seemed to recognize that "rudeness" would seem to be a "trifle" to other Bolsheviks and, therefore, sought to bolster his case by relating it to the rivalry between Stalin and Trotsky. The entire passage suggests that Lenin was something less than firm in his demand for Stalin's removal as secretary-general:

"Stalin is too rude and this defect, although tolerable in our midst and in dealings with us Communists, becomes intolerable in a secretary-general. That is why I suggest that the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post and appointing another man in his stead who in all other aspects differs from Comrade Stalin in having only one advantage, namely, that of being more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and more considerate to the comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may appear to be an insignificant trifle. But I think that from the standpoint of safeguards against a split and from the standpoint of what I wrote above about the relationship between Stalin and Trotsky it is not a trifle, or it is a trifle which can assume decisive significance" (January 4, 1923).

And what if the comrades could not find some paragon among them having the only advantage mentioned by Lenin? Elsewhere Lenin had already found flaws in all the other contenders. That Lenin, for personal as well as political reasons, wanted to remove Stalin from that particular job, not yet considered to be predominant in the party hierarchy, is a noteworthy historical sidelight, but that the others did not take his advice all that seriously and preferred to keep Stalin in charge of the organization is surely equally or more significant. In any case, Lenin's political contribution to the ultimate benefit of Stalinism is hardly negated by this belated, somewhat equivocal criticism of Stalin's personality.

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lution was about to rescue the Soviet Union and put it back on the orthodox Marxist path, it could well have been spared the Stalinist furies.

Evaluating the "Reform"

IN ANY CASE, THE LENINIST LEGACY of "reform" through the NEP was far more complex and double-edged than it is usually made out to be. In its main outline, it was a daring maneuver. Its essence was to use capitalists and capitalist methods against capitalism, to use capitalism against itself.

This strategy followed from Lenin's reasoning, which went as follows: The necessary condition for a full communist economy was the growth of large-scale industry, which in turn was the necessary condition for a growing proletariat. The only way the new, weak Soviet state could get large-scale industry was to get capitalists, Russian and foreign, small and large, to create it for the ultimate benefit of the Soviet state. This was the rationale for inviting foreign capitalism into Soviet Russia in the form of mixed enterprises and economic concessions.

Lenin once put it this way: "Get down to business, all of you! You will have capitalists beside you, including foreign capitalists, concessionaires and leaseholders. They will squeeze profits out of you amounting to hundreds percent; they will enrich themselves, operating alongside of you. Let them. Meanwhile, you will learn from them the business of running the economy, and only when you do that will you be able to build up a communist republic."*

But Lenin always returned to the theme that the capitalists could be permitted to operate only on condition that they should be strictly controlled: "The proletarian state may, without changing its own nature, permit freedom to trade and the development of capitalism only within certain bounds, and only on condition that the state regulates (supervises, controls, determines the forms and methods of) private trade and private capitalism."[12] He also spoke in this vein: "We shall make as many concessions as possible within limits, of course, of what the proletarian *can* concede and yet remain the ruling class."**

All this freedom to trade and develop a limited amount of capitalism was temporary and provisional. Lenin actually anticipated Stalin's campaign against the peasantry by warning that the day of retribution was coming. In 1922, when conditions were showing signs of improvement, he already looked ahead to the next, postreformist stage: "Permit me to say this to you without exaggeration, because in this respect it is really 'the last and decisive battle,' not against international capitalism—against that we shall yet have many 'last and decisive battles'—but against Russian capitalism, *against the capitalism that is growing out of the small-peasant economy, the capitalism that is fostered by the latter. Here we shall have a fight on our hands in the immediate*

*Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 71-72. Two other such Leninist pronouncements convey his attitude: "We are paying a high, an exorbitant price for these things [foreign tank cars], but still, it shows that we are receiving the assistance of large-scale industry of the advanced capitalist countries; it shows that the large-scale industry of the capitalist countries is helping us to restore our economy, although these countries are governed by capitalists who hate us heart and soul" (p. 153)—and, he might have added, we hate them heart and soul. "We Communists shall be able to direct our economy if we succeed in utilizing the hands of the bourgeoisie in building up this economy of ours and in the meantime we learn from this bourgeoisie and guide them along the road we want them to travel" (pp. 290-291).

**The "proletariat" for which Lenin claimed to speak at this time, October 1921, was admittedly a fiction. In this same speech, Lenin acknowledged that "the proletariat has disappeared." He also said scoffingly: "Forgive me, but what is the proletariat? It is the class which is working in large-scale industry. Where is your large-scale industry? What kind of proletariat is it? Where is your industry? Why is it at a standstill?" With virtually no proletariat, it was the party, not the proletariat, or at best the party self-appointed as the representative of the proletariat, that was "the ruling class." But Lenin also said, in March 1922, of the party: "If we do not close our eyes to reality we must admit that at the present time the proletarian policy of the party is not determined by the character of its membership, but by the enormous undivided prestige enjoyed by a small group which might be called the Old Guard of the party." Ironically, the Mensheviks had to be suppressed because, with their preponderant influence in the trade unions, they were far more "proletarian" than the Bolsheviks.

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future, and the date of it cannot be fixed exactly" (emphasis added).[13]

It was left to Stalin to decide on the date and the method, but it was Lenin who had set forth the basic strategy. The NEP, then, was peculiarly two-faced in its economic policy as well as in its political policies. It was to be a period of undetermined duration during which certain freedoms were officially encouraged—the peasants to produce as much as they could for their own profit, small-scale private manufacturing and trade to increase, foreign and domestic capitalists to build up Soviet trade and industry, factory managers relieved of undue interference by the party and trade unions. It was also a period that looked forward to the day when a "last and decisive battle" would be fought against the very same peasants, small-scale manufacturers and traders, factory managers, and foreign and domestic entrepreneurs.

The NEP was a remarkably ingenious and even grandiose gamble—this much I think must be conceded. And it largely succeeded. What it has to tell us for the future is that the Soviet system is far from being as rigid and inflexible as it is sometimes thought to be. Lenin showed how much it could compromise, twist and turn, retreat and advance, without losing its essential character. That is why every reform period goes back to the cult of Lenin against that of Stalin, not so much because Lenin was a permissive Communist and Stalin was not, but because the conditions that faced Lenin demanded a strategy of flexibility, compromise, concessions, indirection, partial retreat, and a breathing space.

Finally, the NEP anticipated future NEP-type reforms by generating a fierce intraparty factional struggle. By 1926, such a struggle broke out between a faction headed by Bukharin and Stalin, who were then allies, and a so-called "United Opposition" that temporarily brought together Zinoviev and Trotsky. Much of this struggle turned ideologically on the future of the NEP. The Bukharin-Stalin faction argued that the NEP had been such a success that it deserved to be continued; the Zinoviev-Trotsky Opposition held that the Soviet economy was losing its socialist character, that it had favored the peasantry too much, and that it was now necessary to emphasize industrialization. The complexities of this struggle would take too long to unravel—it is enough to say that it took Stalin, who now had effective control of the party machine, only about a year to get rid of the leaders of the Opposition, who were expelled in late 1927. Having rid himself of Zinoviev, Trotsky, and their followers, with Bukharin's help, Stalin turned on Bukharin and finished him off.

By 1929, Stalin was supreme. He then turned around again and adopted much of the program of the former "Left Opposition" by pushing through a policy of increased collectivization and rapid industrialization. That was how the short, happy life of the NEP came to an end.

If the NEP was a precedent for later periods of Soviet reform, we should expect to meet again with the encouragement of private initiative in a controlled economic environment, with a temporary improvement in economic conditions, and with an immanent intraparty struggle over how far the reform movement should go.

Khrushchev

Khrushchev will probably be remembered most gratefully for two things—his so-called Secret Speech at the Twentieth Congress in 1956 exposing the evils and crimes of the Stalinist epoch, and the liberation from the gulag and its camps of hundreds of thousands of prisoners, many of them former party members and even staunch Stalinists. Except for these blessings, little seems to remain of Khrushchev's policies, for one reason because they were inconsistent and even self-contradictory.

For example, it was a time of cultural "thaw"; Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was published in 1962 to much rejoicing and acclaim. Yet Pasternak was persecuted in that very same period.

Khrushchev gave the peasants more leeway in the disposition of private surpluses, as the NEP had done three decades earlier. But Khrushchev was also a devotee of the pseudo-scientific agronomist Lysenko.

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By extricating the party from the dead hand of Stalin's vengefulness, Khrushchev gave party members a new sense of security from that terror. But he also upset the party by attempting to tinker with it. At the Twenty-Second Party Congress in 1961, he pushed through changes in the statutes to provide that top officials could hold their jobs for a maximum of fifteen years and middle-ranking officials for only six years. This sort of party reform apparently created a sense of threat in the ranks and later served to turn the whole party against him from top to bottom.

Khrushchev's final fate was easily as significant as anything else that happened in his relatively short-lived period. The most notable thing about his removal was the ease with which it was accomplished. He was apparently completely isolated; Brezhnev took over without a struggle. Khrushchev himself became a nonperson; not even an obituary was published at his death in 1971. Gorbachev and his people prefer never to mention Khrushchev as one of their predecessors. Nevertheless, Khrushchev contributed one invaluable precedent for the benefit of the Gorbachev effort—Khrushchev showed that it was possible to repudiate at least the worst excesses of the Stalinist heritage and die in bed.

Still, even Khrushchev's liberation of Stalin's prisoners is not without a shadow. Here was a system that had to put hundreds of thousands into the gulag in order for Khrushchev to liberate them. When one things of their liberation, even if so many of them came out wasted and broken, one must rejoice; but when one thinks of the system that put them into a hell on earth, one is almost driven to despair.

Among the great powers today, it is only in the Soviet Union that a leader can appear to be a liberator by not subjecting his people to the inhumanity, the barbarism, of his predecessors. If a German chancellor tried to claim credit as a humanitarian for not putting millions of people, including little children, into gas ovens, we would consider him to be a moral monster.

Soviet "liberators," such as Khrushchev, liberate within a system that, unless it is dismantled, requires more liberating. Khrushchev left enough of the system intact so that Gorbachev has plenty of liberating work left to do. We will know that the system has achieved the goal of "a qualitatively new state of Soviet society" only when there is no more need for such Soviet liberators.

Gorbachev

IF WE LOOK AT THE PRESENT PERIOD under Gorbachev from a historical perspective, we might well ask: How original or innovative have Gorbachev's economic policies been?

The answer, I think, must as yet be: Not very. In economic policy, which is the main arena of the present reform, Gorbachev's changes have been remarkably reminiscent of the NEP. For example, a new law has given individuals and families the right to go into private business to manufacture consumer goods like toys and souvenirs and perform services like repairing cars and garden tools. This measure of limited private enterprise goes right back to the NEP and, in addition, merely legalizes what has been going on unofficially if not illegally for years.

In theory, much of Gorbachev's program was put forward as early as 1965, soon after Khrushchev's overthrow, by Alexei N. Kosygin, then the Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Kosygin proposed the decentralization of management, the simplification of central planning, the improvement of productivity and efficiency, with the increasing use of such economic "levers" as profits, prices, incentives, bonuses, loans, and credits.[14] Also in the mid-1960s, the economist Professor Liberman attracted a good deal of attention by advocating decentralization of controls and the replacement of quantitative production quotas with an emphasis on quality and price.

The essential Gorbachev ideas for the Soviet economy are hardly new or original. What is striking is that it has been so hard to carry them out before. What is new is the urgency with which they are now being advanced.

Why the urgency? The reason given by Gorbachev and his lieutenants is that the Soviet Union fell back disastrously during the Brezhnev era. Gorbachev himself has said: "One cannot help seeing that since the early 1970s certain difficulties in economic development

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have begun to make themselves felt."[15] Gorbachev has also spoken of the Brezhnev era in the most scathing terms. In one recent speech, he castigated party members who had "engaged in embezzlement, bribe-taking and report-padding," "manifestations of spiritual emptiness and skepticism," "a scornful attitude towards laws, hoodwinking, bribe-taking and the encouragement of servility and glorification," "banality, primitive tastes and spiritual emptiness."[16] The rot came from the top: "Many party members holding leadership posts were not subject to supervision or criticism, which led to failures in work and serious violations of party ethics."[17]

One of Gorbachev's most outspoken associates, the Moscow party first secretary, Boris Yeltsin, has gone somewhat further in assessing the blame:

> Why do we raise a number of the same problems Congress after Congress? Why has the obviously alien word "stagnation" appeared in our party lexicon? Why have we been unable for so many years to eradicate from our life bureaucratic excess, social injustice, and abuses? Why, even now, is the demand for radical changes getting bogged down in an inert stratum of timeservers with party membership cards? In my opinion, one of the main reasons is that a number of Party officials lack the courage to promptly and objectively assess the situation and their personal role, to tell the truth, even if it is bitter. . . .[18]

If we may take Gorbachev at his word, the present crisis is so profound that it is systemic. He has gone so far as to say that the present crisis demands nothing less than some sort of *revolutionary* change. In Khabarovsk in the summer of 1986, he said: "I would equate the word restructuring with the word revolution."[19] More recently, in January of this year, he reiterated that the new leadership had in mind "truly revolutionary and comprehensive transformations in society."[20] And in February of this year, he told an audience of over 900 people, mainly foreigners, at the so-called International Peace Forum: "You have arrived in the Soviet Union when essentially revolutionary changes are under way."[21]

The term "revolution" need not be taken literally. If Gorbachev meant "revolution" literally, he would be committed to overthrowing the allegedly existing proletarian state and putting a new class in power—at least he would have to do so from a Marxist point of view. His second in command, Yegor K. Ligachev, recently entangled himself in the same Marxist contradiction. "The process of restructuring that is now unfolding is revolutionary in nature—both in scale and in content," he said. "Needless to say, this does not involve changing the essence of our social system."[22] Needless to say, there can be no revolution, for a Marxist, which does not change the essence of a social system. As if he thought that he had gone too far, Gorbachev himself has more recently given assurances that his shake-up would not result in "disorganizing society."[23] How he could lead a revolution without shaking up and disorganizing the existing society, he did not say.

Nevertheless, the very use of such a term as "revolution" for what Gorbachev & Co. want to do is most revealing. It suggests that the changes they want to bring about are so far-reaching that they must resort to rhetorical overkill to make the bureaucracy and the people aware of the full seriousness and basic nature of their plans for a renewal of the entire system.

How basic the changes will actually be is something for the future to decide. As Gorbachev has repeatedly stressed, only a start has yet been made. Nevertheless, it would be a gross mistake to scoff at the whole enterprise.

Cultural Openness

THE SHIFT HAS BEEN MOST MARKED IN THE cultural and journalistic fields. Plays have been put on, books published, films shown, and articles printed that were never before permitted. *Glasnost*, or openness, is the latest miracle cure for whatever ails Soviet society—poor harvests, infant-mortality rates, alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, earthquakes, shipwrecks, hijackings, airplane crashes, even traffic accidents, classified as state secrets.

Thus far, intellectuals have benefited the most. This is all for the best and no one would begrudge the Soviet intellectuals their newly increased freedom of expression. One reason for this favoritism may well be that this second cultural thaw pays off the most in foreign

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appreciation. Another reason may be that the new cultural policy is least likely to cause trouble in the party and in the economy. Most of all, the renewal of the system requires scientific inventiveness and intellectual creativity which cannot be obtained without greater freedom of expression and experimentation.

As yet, unfortunately, the Soviet Union is still in the stage of getting special commendation and reward for permitting a play or book that would be permitted as a matter of course in most Western countries. The Soviet intellectuals' new freedom looks good only against the backdrop of the cultural horrors of the past, not as it might be judged by any standards that Western intellectuals recognize as minimally acceptable. One of the odd things about the stir that the new intellectual permissiveness in the Soviet Union has aroused is that it implicitly assumes that anything better than hard-core Stalinism or soft-core Brezhnevism is a great advance in the history of human freedom. As long as the new Soviet freedom is judged by the standard of Stalinism, it is going to leave much to be desired.

The emphasis on *glasnost* suggests that, if only the people knew how bad things are, they would move to correct them—as if people did not already know how bad things are. *Glasnost* is also a means of showing how bad Gorbachev's predecessors were. New Soviet leaders invariably tear down the old ones—Stalin tore down Lenin's closest coworkers who opposed him, though not Lenin himself; Khrushchev tore down Stalin; Brezhnev tore down Khrushchev; and Gorbachev has been busy tearing down Stalin and Brezhnev. Thus *glasnost* is being practiced in almost every sphere of Soviet life at the expense of past leaders and does nothing to threaten Gorbachev's own record or prestige. One wonders how much *glasnost* there would be for anyone who wished to criticize Gorbachev. So far we hear of widespread resistance to his restructuring, but not a word of it has been permitted to get out in the Soviet media, which he controls as tightly as it has ever been controlled before.

Despite these caveats, the determination of Gorbachev & Co. to shake up the party, to make it enter a new economic and technological age, should not be in doubt. Just how far they really mean to go—or how far they will be able to go—may be debated, but that they sincerely believe that something is deeply and dangerously wrong—and that something drastic must be done about it—cannot, in my opinion, be denied. This is not like any reform movement of the past; it certainly goes further than anything that Lenin or Khrushchev ever thought of proposing.

What, then, is driving Gorbachev's team to such extremes with such urgency?

The question can be answered at least partly with what the new leadership itself has said. It is apparent that something happened some time in the 1970s that caused the rising generation of Soviet leaders to become acutely apprehensive of the future.

In the past, the Soviet economy had moved forward "extensively," that is, by using up more natural resources, building more factories and multiplying the labor force, with little or no modernization of the means of production. If more machinery was turned out, it was a replica of the old machinery. But now, natural and human resources can not be stretched any further; the crisis of the 1970s came about as a result of diminishing returns from the same industrial base.[24] For one thing, the rate of economic growth had begun to fall in the 1970s and continued to fall in the early 1980s. One figure recently revealed by Gorbachev will do to show the depth of the Soviets' economic retrogression. "Over the past three five-year plans [that is, a period of fifteen years]," he disclosed in January of this year, "the growth rates of national income declined by more than 50 percent."[25] The lesson that the present leadership has learned is that extensive, quantitative exploitation of resources, natural and human, must be replaced by intensive, qualitative development.

By the time Gorbachev came to power in March 1985, the full force of this critical economic state of affairs had hit the top leadership. It realized that a scientific and technological revolution had taken place in the rest of the world but had bypassed the Soviet Union. If any one factor may be said to have shaken the leadership out of its accustomed self-satisfaction and inertia, it is this—the failure to meet the competition of what Gorbachev has

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referred to as "the capitalism of the 1980s, the capitalism of the age of electronics and informatics [sic], computers and robots."[26] It was not simply that the Soviet Union had fallen behind the United States or Western Europe in the new technology; it could not produce what Japan, South Korea, and even Taiwan were turning out in mass production and with which they were flooding world markets.

The shock was all the greater if we recall the ambition and pretension that the Soviet leadership had once had. Back in 1961, at the Twenty-Second Party Congress, Khrushchev had boasted of overtaking the United States by 1970 and building a full communist society by 1980. Gorbachev is making no such promises; the problem now is to catch up and make up for lost time, not to overtake and overcome.

Once the urgency of the task had sunk in, it was realized that there was no shortcut to the new era. The whole Soviet system was not prepared for it; the whole system had to be reshaped—or as the current slogan has it, "restructured"—to advance to a higher scientific and technological level. The "scientific and technological revolution," as Gorbachev has put it, "is linked with the improvement of social relations, the restructuring of thinking, the cultivation of a new mentality, and the establishment of dynamism as a way of life, as a norm of existence."[27] All this is a rather tall order—technological, social, ideological and psychological. If taken seriously, it implies that the entire Soviet order desperately needs redoing from top to bottom.

What can possibly account for this extraordinary sense of crisis? The impetus has certainly not come from below. There is no evidence that the Soviet leadership is responding to mass unrest. On the contrary, the leadership is making feverish efforts to stir up the masses, to make them more responsive to change, to shake them out of their accustomed ways, and to bring the utmost pressure to bear on them to change their habits of thought and work—habits instilled by the previous six decades of Communist rule.

Gorbachev's revolution will not succeed if it remains "from above." It must set the broad masses in motion and therein lies both its promise and its peril. A major transformation from top to bottom can release huge energies hitherto held back by enfeebled leadership and enervated bureaucracy. But once the masses of people get the idea that they have been released from automatic party tutelage and obedience, they may take things into their own hands and test the limits of Gorbachev's invitation to democratize and initiate from below. Limits there almost certainly are and will be, but no doubt the present leadership considers them to be something to be worried about if and when they have been reached.

Superpower Slippage

My own belief is that the new Soviet leadership has been shocked into action primarily by the prospect of a precipitous decline in prestige and power on the world stage. The Soviets have struggled for decades to obtain a position of accepted parity with the United States in a world of only two superpowers, with all other nations trailing behind.

Now that position has been threatened by two main developments.

One may be described as ideological or cultural. The Marxism-Leninism of the Soviet Union had become an ideology to be scorned, when not ignored. Culturally the Soviet Union had been turned into a wasteland from which creative writers and artists had fled or been driven out. Such creative minds as were left had their freedom of expression stifled or suppressed.

The best proof that Soviet cultural or intellectual status had sunk abysmally is what has happened in France. Two or three decades ago there was hardly an influential intellectual who was not a member of the French Communist party or at least a fellow traveler. Today there is hardly one who is. The term "communist intellectual" has become virtually an oxymoron.

I would not underestimate the cost to Soviet prestige and influence of this worldwide phenomenon. I would imagine that it helps to account for the zeal with which the Gorbachev leadership is trying to revive Soviet culture and give it some free air to breathe in.

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But by far the greatest threat to the Soviets' world position has come from its scientific and technological retrogression. A country that cannot hold its own technologically with South Korea or Taiwan has reason to worry if it also claims to be one of the world's two superpowers. It has even more reason to worry if its leaders finally realize that they cannot go on in the old way, that the rules of the game were changed while they were not looking.

At the very outset of his regime in 1985, Gorbachev struck this note: "The country's historical destiny and the positions of socialism in today's world depend in large part on how we handle matters from now on"—by which he meant "making broad use of the scientific and technological revolution and bringing the forms of socialist economic management into line with present-day conditions and requirements."[28] A year later, in the summer of 1986, he put the same thought this way: "We should, we simply must, make socialism stronger, a dynamically developing system that competes successfully with capitalist society in all parameters. This requires, above all, complete and effective use of the truly inexhaustible possibilities that are opened up by the scientific and technological revolution."[29] That scientific and technological revolution is almost an obsessive theme in Gorbachev's speeches. The international, military, economic, and social implications of falling so far behind must be equally obsessive.

Another indication of how serious the present leadership is in its determination—one might almost say its desperation—to pick itself up by its scientific and technological bootstraps is the amount of resistance the program is said to be encountering. One of the peculiar aspects of the present Soviet scene is the anxiety of Soviet spokesmen to stress how great the internal resistance is. Hardly a visitor to the Soviet Union these days comes back without having been regaled with tales of the extent of such resistance throughout the huge bureaucracy.

Gorbachev is said to have unburdened himself privately to a group of some thirty Soviet writers in June of last year:

> Between the people who want and long for changes and the leadership that encourages them, there is the administrative staff of the party apparatus and the ministries who do not want changes. . . . Take Gosplan [the State Planning Committee]. As far as Gosplan is concerned, there is no authority, there is no General Secretary, no Central Committee. Its officials do whatever they want. . . . The transformation is going ahead. . . . But if you only knew with how much anguish all this is proceeding. . . . "[30]

Judging from the public complaints that Gorbachev and others have made about the resistance they are encountering, this source would seem to be credible. *Pravda* itself reported that at a meeting with the writers Gorbachev had said:

> It [restructuring] is not coming easily. Conflict situations are showing up, and various stands are being fully revealed. In the process that is under way we are encountering everything imaginable—from wait-and-see philosophy to a lack of forethought and rashness.[31]

But where is the resistance coming from—and why? Here again we can learn a good deal from what Gorbachev and others have said publicly about the difficulty they are having pulling and pushing the party into the new age.

At just about the time Gorbachev is said to have complained bitterly to the Soviet writers, he made much the same charges—if less emotionally—at a plenum of the party's Central Committee in mid-June 1986. He complained that "the restructuring itself is proceeding slowly so far . . . old approaches pull us back, and inertia is still strong. . . . The turn to quality, efficiency and new methods of leadership is taking place painfully and with difficulty."

Gorbachev blamed various types of resistance. Quite a few party members, he said, "have a political understanding of the need to work in a new way but simply don't know how to do this in practice." Others "take a wait-and-see attitude or do not believe in the success of the economic and political breakthrough planned by the party." Still others claim "that the directives voiced at the [Twenty-Seventh] Party Congress [in February 1986] apply to the sphere of high-level policy, while practical work should take its normal course, following beaten paths. It must be said that such moods are still common among party personnel."[32]

Three months later, in September 1986,

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Gorbachev made more serious charges about the nature of the resistance. He now accused "quite a few people who understand very well what restructuring is" but do not accept it, because "their main concern is to preserve the old, outmoded ways, to preserve their privileges, even though this is not in accordance with our principles, laws and morality or with our current policy." Among these people were workers and peasants, he said, but his real targets were "executives and administrative personnel" as well as "some among our intelligentsia." His wrath was mainly directed at "executives [who] are set in their ways, and they don't want to change their old thinking." In this speech, Gorbachev saw fit to evoke the memory of the NEP "when V.I. Lenin had to exert considerable effort to prove the need for a new economic policy," as if Lenin's effort was similar to and justified his own.[33]

Gorbachev has given an even more serious reason for another type of resistance. There are still people, he said, who "often see not what it [restructuring] in fact contains but [what is to them] all but a shaking of foundations, all but a renunciation of our principles." These are people who "have difficulty in accepting the word 'restructuring' and who even sometimes can pronounce it only with difficulty." The present political line, he protested defensively, "is aimed at fully disclosing the potential and advantages of the socialist system," not at renouncing or betraying it.[34]

This latter line of opposition implies, ironically, that Gorbachev might be charged with trying to carry through a counterrevolution, not a revolution—a counterrevolution, that is to say, against the kind of society that communism had come to represent in the Soviet Union for most of its past. This recalls the same type of accusation by so-called Left Communists against Lenin's NEP. There is, however, a difference. Lenin frankly described the NEP as a "retreat," "respite," "breathing space." Gorbachev and his supporters use none of these terms.

In any case, we can now identify at least three types of resisters:

- Those who are unprepared to adapt or are incapable of adapting to the new line;
- Those who do not wish to adapt to it owing to its threat to their vested interests;
- And those who see the new line as threatening the "socialist" foundations of the Soviet political and economic system.

One clear lesson would seem to be that it is premature to pronounce upon the ultimate fate of this effort. Gorbachev himself has frequently said that it is just about getting started. Inasmuch as Gorbachev has revealed that the Central Committee meeting in January of this year had to be postponed three times, presumably because the leadership was not sure of its backing, there is reason to believe that the resistance extends into the higher, if not the highest, echelons of the party. At any rate, the leadership is not taking any chance of promising too much too soon. It has given itself fifteen years, to the year 2000, to achieve "a qualitatively new state of Soviet society," instead of the usual one or two five-year plans.[35]

Gorbachev has sufficiently reconstructed the top leadership so that he probably does not have to fear being overthrown from that quarter soon. In this respect, he seems to have learned the lesson of Khrushchev, who was easily removed because he had not been able to put his own men into the Politburo. But Gorbachev appears to have far more support in the top ranks than down below. His main problem is with the party and ministerial bureaucracies. What happens in the party is more than anything else going to decide whether he succeeds or fails.

Threat to Party Bureaucrats

THERE IS AN OBVIOUS REASON why the whole party is not overjoyed with his grandiose plans. The Soviet party has long been accustomed to controling all the levers of power, large and small. The party has now been put on notice that the economy cannot enter the new era unless it surrenders a good many of its former prerogatives. One of the prime aims of the new leadership is to decentralize the economy and to give more decision making to the managers of individual and group enterprises. Gorbachev and his lieutenants have made clear that decentralization cannot be accomplished unless the dead hand of party bureaucracy is removed

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from nonparty economic and other types of organizations.

Towards the end of 1986, Gorbachev declared:

> The foremost task today is to radically improve the style, forms, and methods of party organizations' work. . . . To this end, it is necessary to be more resolute in doing away with the practice of supplanting economic, soviet, and public organizations, to increase their independence and responsibility, and to dispense with the technocratic approach to solving political and social problems."[36]

It should not be hard to understand why this kind of talk strikes some elements in the party as subversive of all they had been taught and had practiced for decades, why it should appear to them as "shaking the foundations" and "all but a renunciation of our principles."

On the other hand, to mollify the discontented, Gorbachev has also resorted to doubletalk. He has vowed in almost the same breath "to improve centralized principles in the management of the national economy" and "in every way expand the rights and economic independence of enterprises and associations and increase their responsibility for the results of their activity."[37]

How Gorbachev & Co. propose to accomplish this delicate operation of centralizing and decentralizing simultaneously will be most interesting to observe. The traditional means at hand are basically persuasion, force, or a combination of both. He could succeed by persuasion alone only if he commanded the support of the overwhelming majority in the party and country. This seems at present to be unlikely, or there would not be so much talk about the strength of the resistance. But Gorbachev has cut himself off from the use of force, Stalin-style or anything like it, precisely by trying to put so much distance between his type of rule and Stalin's. If he resorts to force, he will make a mockery of his repeated professions of seeking to open up the Soviet system to increased democratization, and he will undercut his populist appeal.

Still, Gorbachev and his close associates seem to have burned their bridges behind them. If persuasion fails, it is hard to see them giving up without a struggle. Certainly they have not been backward about carrying out a systematic purge of middle-level bureaucrats and administrators who have failed to live up to their demands. Hardly an issue of *Pravda* or *Izvestia* passes without a notice of some luckless bureaucrat losing his job for failure to pass muster according to the new dispensation. Unlike Stalin's era, however, loss of job has not meant loss of head.

Stalin accomplished a bloody revolution from above; Gorbachev would obviously like to accomplish a bloodless revolution from above, though on condition that it succeeds in enlisting mass approval and support from below. The future tactics of Gorbachev's revolution may depend on the resistance it encounters; the more the resistance, the more likely the pressure from above to overcome it. In any case, revolutions from above are notoriously treacherous; what can be set off from above can also be reversed from above, as the Chinese case is now demonstrating—and not for the first time.

One can sympathize with party members and ordinary bureaucrats who have seen these campaigns and slogans come and go, knowing full well that what comes from the top can go from the top. The paradox is that Gorbachev's main political mechanism for change is the habit and enforcement of Communist party discipline; he needs party discipline in order to loosen party control, but the loosening of party control may well threaten the party's unity and even lead to a factional struggle resembling that of the late 1920s or by his abrupt removal à la Krushchev.

Can Gorbachev succeed? The answer depends on what success is thought to mean. He can, to my mind, certainly make the present system work better, if only by such means as the campaign against drunkenness and absenteeism. This sort of thing may be called reforms within the system. But, if we are to take seriously Gorbachev's analysis of what ails the Soviet system and what must be done to cure it, he needs to accomplish more—much, much more.

There is a basic problem with evaluating what Gorbachev is doing or plans to do. It is that we must consider not only what is changed but what is left unchanged. Thus far almost all

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emphasis has been put on the changes, most of which are still in the realm of intention or experiment rather than of accomplished facts. We will not know how to draw up a balance sheet of Gorbachev's "restructuring" for quite a while, and for that we will have to know what he has not changed as well as what he has.

If the real trouble is with the system, and it actually requires some sort of "revolution," my advice to anyone waiting for the outcome would be: Don't hold your breath. □

This article was presented as the Sixth Annual Stanley Plastrik Memorial Lecture.

Notes

[1] Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Printers, 1966), Vol. 33, p. 61.

[2] Ibid., p. 67.

[3] Ibid., p. 470.

[4] Ibid., pp. 109-110.

[5] Ibid., p. 437.

[6] Ibid., pp. 160, 177, 392, 470.

[7] Ibid., p. 220.

[8] Ibid., p. 283.

[9] Ibid., p. 313.

[10] For an excellent account of this episode, see Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin As Revolutionary* (New York: Norton, 1973), pp. 270-273, 288-291.

[11] Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 480. This statement appeared in the comment, "Our Revolution," written in January 1923 in reply to Nikolai Sukhanov's well-known *Notes on the Revolution*. The entire piece shows that Lenin was haunted to the end of his days by the argument with the Mensheviks over the prerequisites of a socialist revolution and finally admitted that the Bolsheviks had decided to "create the fundamental requisites of civilization in a different way from that of the West-European countries."

[12] Ibid., p. 185.

[13] Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 277. There is still a dispute over Lenin's basic attitude toward the NEP. Was it a tactical retreat to last only as long as it provided the necessary preconditions for an advance towards an orthodox socialist economy, or was it itself "the road to socialism" and, therefore, not to be cast aside as soon as it had exhausted its usefulness? An article, "The Importance of Gold Now and After the Complete Victory of Socialism," published in *Pravda*, November 6-7, 1921, has been interpreted as bearing out the latter sense, because it cautions that revolutions are doomed if it is believed that they "can and must solve all problems in a revolutionary manner under all circumstances and in all spheres of action." But the emphasis in this article is on the particular circumstances of the time to justify a reformist "retreat"—a key term in this article—which Lenin says "is coming to an end." Far from having given up "revolutionary methods," Lenin looked forward to getting back to them as soon as the lack of "sufficient strength" had been overcome (Vol. 33, pp. 109-116).

The same problem has been posed by one of Lenin's last articles, "On Cooperation," of January 1923. It made cooperative societies a further advance of the NEP and maintained that they were "all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society." Since Lenin here equated cooperatives with socialist enterprises, there seems to be little more than a change of terminology, inasmuch as he eliminated the difference between them "if the land on which they are situated and the means of production belong to the state, i.e., the working class." In any case, the prospect was put far off, because "it will take a whole historical epoch to get the entire population into the work of the cooperatives through NEP." To get the overwhelming mass of peasants into cooperative societies, however, required a "cultural revolution" among them—a term unexpectedly introduced in this context and hardly one to be expected in the foreseeable future.

This visionary article cannot be easily assimilated in the corpus of Lenin's previous writings. After Lenin's stroke in May 1922, he was entirely cut off from all active participation in party work and appears to have given himself over to speculations uncharacteristic of Marxist thought. One was that the final outcome of the world struggle for socialism "will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe," rather than by the proletariat in the more advanced industrial countries (p. 500). Thus Lenin's brooding in 1923 cannot be taken as necessarily representing his view of the NEP in 1921-1922, when he was still fully engaged in promoting it. In any case, as he admitted, few "practical workers" in the party appreciated the "exceptional importance" of cooperatives (pp. 467-475), which had to wait for the present Gorbachev period to be taken up again, if as yet on a small scale, with official approval.

[14] At the Central Committee plenum in September 1965 (*Pravda*, September 28, 1965, cited by Hanson Leung C.K., *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Winter 1985, pp. 231-232).

[15] *Pravda*, June 12, 1985. [All translations from *Pravda* hereafter are taken from the *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, published weekly at Columbus, Ohio. Reprinted by permission of the *Digest*.

[16] *Pravda*, January 28, 1987.

[17] Ibid.

[18] *Pravda*, February 27, 1986.

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[19] *Pravda*, August 2, 1986.

[20] *Pravda*, January 28, 1987.

[21] Katrina vanden Heuvel, the *Nation*, March 7, 1987.

[22] *Pravda*, November 7, 1986.

[23] *New York Times*, February 26, 1987.

[24] "Through inertia, the economy continued to develop to a large degree on an extensive basis, oriented toward drawing additional labor and material resources into production. As a consequence, the growth rate of labor productivity and certain other indices of efficiency dropped substantially. Attempts to rectify the problem through new construction exacerbated the problem of balance. The national economy, which has vast resources, ran into resource shortages. A gap formed between social requirements and the achieved level of production, between effective demand and the amount of goods available to meet that demand" (Gorbachev, *Pravda*, February 26, 1986).

[25] *Pravda*, January 28, 1987.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., April 24, 1985.

[29] Ibid., July 1, 1986.

[30] First published in the Italian newspaper, *La Repubblica*, October 7, 1986, cited by Stephen F. Cohen, the *Nation*, November 15, 1986.

[31] *Pravda*, June 21, 1986.

[32] Ibid., June 17, 1986.

[33] Ibid., September 20, 1986.

[34] Ibid., August 2, 1986.

[35] Ryzhkov, ibid., March 4, 1986.

[36] Ibid., October 24, 1986.

[37] Ibid., June 17, 1986.

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Robert Lekachman

The Craze for "Privatization"

Dubious Social Results of a Reaganite Dogma

The drive for "privatization" first began to gain momentum, like such key elements of the Reagan agenda as deregulation and acceleration of weapons procurement (the infamous MX was a Carter favorite), in Jimmy's administration. Its advocates claim that privatization not only saves money by substituting flexible market structures for rigid bureaucracy, it also widens consumer choice. Tuition tax credits for the parents of children enrolled in private or religious schools increase the diversity of educational programs, a good thing. They impose heavier pressure upon public schools to meet stronger competition, a better thing. Best of all, they dismantle local monopolies long enjoyed by public schools. To no article of faith are economists more strongly attached than their utter certainty that monopoly any place, any time connotes inefficiency, sterile repetition of outmoded production and delivery techniques, and corresponding absence of innovation.

WHERE IS THE LINE TO BE DRAWN between private and public operation? Apparently not in the vast health industry. Employment in hospitals nearly doubled between 1966 and 1979, but the rates of growth differed notably by type of ownership. Employment in public hospitals rose a mere 58 percent, in the nonprofit voluntaries 90 percent, but in the profit-making sector a dramatic 130 percent. An even more rapidly expanding health specialty—nursing home facilities—now operates nearly 80 percent for profit. Humana, Hospital Corporation of America, and American Medical International, the largest for-profit hospital operators, continue to acquire nonprofits, municipal hospitals, and even university-affiliated medical centers like that of George Washington University.

Out there of course are carping critics like Dr. Arnold S. Relman, editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, who asserts that

> The for-profit hospitals avoid services that are not profitable, even though they may be of use to the community. . . . Hospitals make money on short-term illness, preferably elective surgical procedures on otherwise healthy, relatively young people. They like short stays and a lot of diagnostic studies. They don't like patients who need labor-intensive care, like burn patients, or the chronically ill, or elderly patients. That's expensive.[1]

And of course, as a price of progress toward market efficiency, an occasional patient dies. When Humana opened its new Louisville hospital in May 1983, it announced that it would not include a burn unit. Soon afterwards Norton-Kosair Children's Hospital, a nonprofit unit that for nine years had treated burn patients, announced that it could no longer afford to accept adult burn patients, on whom it had lost $400,000 during the preceding year. The sequel?

> The inevitable happened. On June 23, 1983, a 50-year-old woman was severely burned in an explosion on her houseboat in the Ohio River. She was picked up by an ambulance provided by Meic Inc. of Jeffersonville, Ind., across the river. Brenda K. Noon, the ambulance dispatcher, said in a memorandum that she called Norton-Kosair while the ambulance was on the way there. "I in turn advised Unit 237 Norton's will not accept the patient," she wrote. The patient was then sent to the Humana Hospital-University and died of smoke inhalation.[2]

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The furor locally caused by the incident impelled Humana to open a burn unit, an action no doubt consoling to the victim's relatives and friends.

As chain spokespersons concede, hospital charges frequently rise in the wake of takeovers, particularly of rural county hospitals, populated mostly by paying patients. In Collin County, Texas, voters rejected a bond issue to raise funds for their county hospital. American Medical International bought the hospital and promptly hiked charges 20 percent. As Dr. Ron Anderson, administrator of Dallas's public Parkland Hospital, put it, "What the County Commissioners couldn't do, raise taxes, A. M. I. did with a hidden tax, by raising charges."

Are the hospital chains truly more efficient? Do their economies of scale and business school managerial skills really more than compensate for inflated executive salaries and generous stockholder dividends? These are early days in a market almost daily transformed by political and corporate maneuver. Nevertheless, none of the available inquiries reach conclusions inspiring to free-market zealots. A 1984 study conducted by the Hospital Research and Educational Trust, an American Hospital Associate affiliate, concluded that in the 272 hospitals studied there were no significant efficiency differences between public and for-profit units. A California analysis echoed this judgment: "Given equal responsibility, accountability and amounts of money, government-operated public services have nearly always been shown to be equal to or better in quality than privately operated ones."[3]

Still another California survey, which compared charges by 53 chain hospitals, 78 independent proprietary hospitals, 114 voluntary nonprofits, and 35 public units, discovered that the chains' inpatient bills were 24 percent higher than those of the nonprofits. There was no indication that patients received better medical care for their money. As in California, so in Florida. The state's Hospital Cost Containment Board study covering 1980-1984 recorded 11 percent higher charges in profit-seeking hospitals and, belying efficiency claims, 4 percent higher operating costs.[4]

Communities lured into deals with the for-profits often live to regret them. Wyoming County Community Hospital in Warsaw, N.Y., for example, terminated its contract with the Hospital Corporation of America because the financial problems that seemed to justify recourse to the private sector persisted. As Douglas Bliss, the hospital board's chairman, unhappily conceded, "We had problems before they came, and they got worse when they were here." Public hospitals in Greene County and the town of Cuba, also in conservative upstate New York, decided not to renew management contracts. The alleged magic of the marketplace apparently diminishes neither the cost of patient care nor the soaring prices attached to ever more exotic advances in medical technology.

If our current festival of private enterprise continues, a thousand studies heaped high to the heavens will not slow privatization in the health sector, because its benefits are less financial than they are sociological. One of the tribulations of hospitalization is the sort of people one meets. In the next bed may restlessly toss someone of the wrong color, occupation, life style, or income. Privatization promises better company. Treatment in a strategically located Humana hospital warrants continuation in sickness as in health of safe, middle-class suburban life. Your fellow patients fit snugly into your own class niche. Their education, jobs, income, and opinions are just like those you encounter in your car pool or on the commuter train. Critics of corporate hospitals justifiably complain that they cream the population, consigning difficult people and their complicated ailments to public and voluntary units. Of course. The critics have identified the major attraction of private hospitals to those creamed. Who prefers skimmed milk to cream?

To the degree that purveyors of hospital care turn themselves into extensions of consumer culture, they attract customers attuned to the familiar arts of advertising and marketing. At the beginning of 1985, there were approximately 2,300 immediate-or-urgent care centers, conveniently located either in shopping malls or nearby freestanding buildings. In the

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spirit of Adam Smith if not of Hippocrates, these operate as entrepreneurial ventures. Of the 2,300, 83 were Humana Medfirst Clinics, 29 Flashner Medical Partnership Doctors' Officenters, 23 Centra Units, 18 Instant Care centers managed by National Medical Enterprises, to give appropriate recognition to some of the more prominent operators. After all, an appointment usually is necessary with a physician in private practice. Emergency room visits entail long delays in disagreeable environments, and pot-luck assignment to a doctor who happens to be on duty. In pleasant contrast, one can stroll into a shopping mall medical office and secure quick treatment for a mild flu virus, a migraine headache, twisted ankle, minor burn, or stomach upset from lunching at one of the mall's fast food emporia. One-stop service. A credit card is acceptable for quick settlement of the bill. Like their hospital companions, immediate-care centers overtly appeal to the imperatives of efficiency and profit and covertly respond to the claims of class and status.

As Dr. Gerard Anderson of Johns Hopkins temperately observed, "You will find them in a Westport, a Stamford or a Greenwich but not necessarily in Harlem." For the middle-class customers, the benefit is, above all, convenience. Typical immediate-care centers are available for business seven days a week, 365 days a year, 12-16 hours daily. Group practices, let alone solo operators, keep bankers' rather than retailers' hours. Fees usually compare favorably with conventional charges. For young doctors, there are financial temptations. At age 30, Dr. Bernard Corbett closed his private practice and enlisted in MedCenter, explaining that "It's becoming more competitive and it's become increasingly expensive for a young physician to set up his own practice. With these urgent-care centers you can go into practice, but you don't have to worry about money and the front office. There is someone else doing that."

One fears that Dr. Corbett is naive. If he does not attract enough customers, he will rapidly discover that the folks in the front office, who tend to worry more about their money than Dr. Corbett's, will either replace him with a more enterprising healer or shut the office down. Hippocrates by the numbers in the esteem of thoroughly socialized MBAs is indistinguishable from other services and products. Humana and its major rivals define instant-care centers as conduits into their hospitals, much as private physicians send patients to voluntary units.

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN CASH AND THE quality of health care has always been uncomfortably high in America. Nevertheless, until recently official rhetoric and, to some extent, actual public funding operated to check the sorting of patients by income. Before the United States began to deindustrialize, major corporate and some public employers offered health coverage generous enough to pay almost all hospital room charges and physicians' fees. Employees freely chose their own doctors. The latter sent patients to hospitals as their medical judgment directed. Medicare was designed to relieve the elderly of the bulk of their health care costs. Employed and retired blue-collar workers and their families shared physicians and hospital space with more affluent types.

In the ways just discussed, privatization enlarges the impact of income and wealth upon the quantity and quality of medical care. There is more to be said. Responding to competitive pressure, and taking advantage of union weakness, corporate America has launched a major offensive against employee health benefits. Strategies feature mandatory second opinions, channeling to outpatient surgery, limitations upon reimbursable hospital sojourns, and preferred provider plans that limit or penalize free choice of personal physicians. Medicare pays a diminishing fraction of pensioners' medical expenses and propels rising percentages of the elderly into the Medicaid system after they exhaust assets during extended nursing home stays. It scarcely helps matters that the Reagan administration proposes to eliminate federal regulation of nursing homes.

Privatization redefines health care. No longer is it a basic human right—its status in other advanced societies. In the new order, customers choose health care products much as they shop for cars, refrigerators, and microwave

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ovens. Quaker Oats' 4,000 employees in and around Chicago have been presented with a booklet listing charges in 44 hospitals for such procedures as normal delivery of babies, tonsillectomies, and cardiac catheterization. Prudential Insurance and an employers' organization, the Midwest Business Group on Health, compiled the information. Quaker Oats toilers pay 15 percent of their hospital bills. If they heed the booklet's message, they can henceforth minimize their hospital charges by shopping around for the cheapest facilities and, unmentioned corollary, doctors who enjoy admitting privileges into them. Totally rational patients will change doctors if necessary to minimize costs. Zenith challenges its 7,000 workers in Glenview, Illinois, to save on maternity costs: "Having a baby: can you beat the average?" A true challenge to prospective parents. Zenith's Healthcare newsletter helpfully lists delivery prices in twenty-five hospitals. At fifteen of them average costs for normal deliveries exceeded the Zenith average maternity bill. Do the cheaper hospitals offer inferior care? Zenith does not evaluate hospitals, it prices them.

Operating on conventional business principles, profit-making hospitals grab for larger market shares in competition with nonprofits by segmenting their customers. For those who can afford them, VIP suites and gourmet cuisine are available. Elsewhere all available corners will be cut. Nurses will become more productive. Translation: the ratio of patients to nurses, aides, and attendants will rise. Patients will be prematurely discharged when insurance or Medicare reimbursement threatens to run out. Interns and residents will work even longer hours than is the barbarous medical tradition. Pressure upon medically insured workers and their families to pay more of their own health care bills reinforces shopping by price. It also saves money in the short run for employers and employees because cost conscious families will hesitate to consult doctors for seemingly minor ailments. In the not so long run, some of these ailments will turn serious, entail days or weeks of incapacity for work and much larger medical bills.

Those voluntary hospitals that survive will unavoidably cut costs in much the same fashion as their corporate rivals. Nonprofits and for-profits will do their best to dump financially unrewarding patients upon chronically overcrowded and underfunded municipal facilities. As market medicine dictates, indigent, elderly, and chronically ailing patients will get the care they merit—as little as possible. As President Reagan is fond of saying, America is back—to the era of public and private charity.

Private Prisons

I HAVE LINGERED UPON THE HEALTH SECTOR because of its life and death significance and its sheer size, some 11 percent of the Gross National Product, nearly twice the Pentagon's share. Privatization is not confined to health services. It extends far beyond garbage and bill collection to the criminal justice system. Even Adam Smith, the saint of minimal government, legitimized public administration of courts. In America, it is unwise to underestimate the entrepreneurial imagination. By 1984, private, profit-making enterprises owned or managed about two dozen major correctional facilities according to an American Correctional Association estimate. Its authors guess that the number will rise rapidly. Incarceration strikes the Nashville-based Corrections Corporation of America as an activity ripe for market discipline. Its president proclaimed that "Our basic mission is to provide correctional services to government in an efficient, cost-effective manner."

Take Dennis E. Bradby as a corrections pioneer. He runs the Silverdale Detention Center, housing 325 prisoners serving long terms for felonies as serious as murder; county offenders enjoying Silverdale hospitality for less than a year; and a handful of drunk drivers drying out during mandatory 48-hour penalty sessions. The facility is located on the edge of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Along with his 46 subordinates, Bradby wears a camel-colored sweater bearing the insignia of the Corrections Corporation of America. If it comforts the inmates, nobody is called a guard. They are all "resident supervisors." The Corrections Corporation has rivals. Buckingham Security, Ltd. even now is constructing a $20 million, 715-cell, maximum security penitentiary north of Pittsburgh. It will specialize in child molesters,

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individuals in protective custody, and hard cases menaced by members of the general prison population.

Why profit-making prisons? Their advocates point to numerous virtues. Corporations avoid cumbersome state contractual procedures. Thus a facility that would take four years to build if constructed by a state agency might open in six months under corporate inspiration. Private managers can freely hire and fire without sabotage from civil service rules or incompetent patronage hacks. As in any other new industry, enterprises tend to be innovative, vigorous, and lean in managerial style. Private prisons may actually be more humane than public alternatives. The Reverend Thomas Sheehy, who handles liaison for the diocese of Galveston-Houston with an immigration detention center managed by the Corrections Corporation of America, declared that "If I had my choice of this private organization, or it being run by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, I would take this private organization. They're much more humane. The guards haven't been in the business that long, so they're not calloused."

Issues of law and equity aside, is the public getting a good bargain when government shrinks and private contractors assume new responsibilities? There is excellent cause for skepticism. Corporate newcomers to the criminal justice market, for example, will no doubt pursue the successful strategy pioneered by space contractors: bid low on initial contracts and, once customers are locked into personal and business relationships convenient to all parties, raise prices sharply. Competition is as inadequate a safeguard here as it has been in Pentagon procurement. Municipalities and states that consign construction and management of new prisons to corporate entrepreneurs will rapidly discover that they have as little alternative to private operation as the Pentagon does in dealing with a single source of a weapons system. Illustrative of the ailment is the Pentagon's intermittent suspension of General Dynamics as recipient of new contracts. Invariably eligibility is restored just in time to qualify the contractor for still another lucrative helping of military appropriations. A government-corrections, a government-research, a government-health care partnership seems fated to replicate the expensive history of the military-industrial complex, complete with conflicts of interest on the part of bureaucrats who plan to move into the very private sector with which they officially deal, much as generals, admirals, colonels, and commanders smoothly shrug out of their uniforms into corporate pinstripes as extravagantly rewarded vice presidents of General Dynamics, Martin Marrieta, General Electric, Rockwell, and smaller clients of the Department of Defense. Ossified corporate bureaucracies wage phony war against their ossified government counterparts. Imaginative accounting is part of the game. As an impediment to economic efficiency, a single Pentagon—industrial complex is more than enough.

Private prisons and private jails threaten civil rights as well as state and local solvency. Resident counselors will shortly become as calloused as traditional guards. Prisoners will have even less protection against brutality and arbitrary discipline than they do now. Some enterprises already in operation do not inspire confidence in wholesale privatization of the corrections system. The Danner Corporation operates a Houston facility that lodged sixteen stowaways in a windowless twelve-by-twenty-foot cellar. One of the immigrants tried to escape while their guard took a telephone call. A second guard, untrained in the use of firearms, proceeded to kill one inmate and wound another. In his previous career as warden of the Lewisburg penitentiary in Pennsylvania, one of the brothers who founded Buckingham, another corporate operator, was among a group of prison officials charged with inflicting cruel and unusual punishment upon two inmates in their charge.

Are corporate managers willing or, if willing, able to protect the constitutional rights of their involuntary customers? Can states delegate such protection to private entities? At least one jurist, Chief Judge John Singleton of the Federal District Court in Houston, has held that the Immigration and Naturalization Service could not constitutionally surrender to private contractors its responsibilities to aliens. In his

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blunt language, "Because both immigration and detention are traditionally the exclusive prerogative of the state, it is evident that the actions of all the defendants were state action within the purview of the public function doctrine."

The final and most powerful charge against corrections privatization is ethical. Imprisonment punishes its human target. The rule of law prescribes fair trial in open court before anyone can be deprived of personal freedom. The men and women who administer punishment are state agents, responsible to elected public officials and elected or appointed judges. Private prisons, like private hospitals, are driven by profit maximization, not sensitivity to the needs of rights of prisoners or patients. As Michael Walzer has asked, "Is this punishment or economic calculation, the law or the market?"[5]

success of Ohio Works, a private corporation which recruits and trains entry-level workers

Job training for profit should also be on the suspect list. For various reasons, government-sponsored programs have received mixed reviews. In time of fiscal crisis, CETA funds were diverted from job training to support of ordinary police, fire protection, education, and sanitation municipal operations. It is too soon to evaluate the Reagan Job Partnership experiment. Can the profit maximizers train workers at lower cost and guide them into more permanent jobs than public alternatives? They are trying. Favorable evidence is scanty but, such as it is, deserves attention. In 1984, Ohio's Democratic governor, Richard Celeste celebrated "the early success of Ohio Works, a private corporation which recruits and trains

Ohio Works has expanded into other states. Additional corporate trainers have entered the market. Good luck to all of them. But the evidence of success is slender, anecdotal, and suspiciously subject to the familiar allegation of "creaming." All job training veterans know how to generate a flow of inspiring results. Simply recruit welfare recipients who are newcomers to dependency, suffer the smallest educational deficits, possess reasonably good work histories, and, with morale reasonably intact, lust for new jobs. It is comparatively easy to persuade employers to gamble on such people, many or most of whom would have found jobs for themselves. Cost-benefit calculations are certain to deter corporate trainers and motivators from dipping very far down into the pool of the long-term jobless. For this population, success rates are low and per capita expenditures high. From one point of view, the Job Corps' 35 percent success rate is an inspiring outcome. Corporations want quicker, cheaper, and more predictable results. Residential programs of the Job Corps variety are expensive—$15,000 or so for a year's training.

For all its obvious and potential failings, privatization is a spreading affliction. At least one community has replaced its police force with a private security company. Numerous towns and cities have delegated fire protection and garbage collection to private operators. Entrepreneurs run airport control towers. Dun and Bradstreet and smaller credit agencies screen applicants for federal loans, grants, and contracts. Administration plans include shrinkage of the Veterans Administration hospital system and substitution of private alternatives, among them corporate hospitals. The Office of Management and Budget wants private insurance companies to manage, among other federal efforts, Medicare, Medicaid, and federal crop insurance. The results already are impressive. The federal government bought $100 billion of private commercial services in 1980. The comparable 1985 figure is $173 billion.

Is government really that bad? Is private enterprise that good? Skeptics note how often privatization enthusiasts cite a New York City comparison of the costs of private and public garbage collection. Can it be that other examples of private efficiency are scarce? Nonetheless, for better or worse, more Reagan entails more privatization. □

Notes

[1] See the *New York Times*, January 26, 1985, A 5

[2] Idem.

[3] "Public Hospitals Under Private Management" by William Shonick and Ruther Romer, cited in *The New York Times*, (Idem).

[4] Idem.

[5] "At McPrison and Burglar King, It's Hold the Justice," *The New Republic*, April 8, 1985, pp 10-12.

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Stephen L. Newman

The Chimeras of "Libertarianism"

What's Behind This Political Movement?

The liberal tradition has always been ambivalent toward government. On the one hand, liberal theorists have usually deemed some form of civil government necessary to the security of life and property. In Locke's view, only the promulgation and enforcement of law by a universally recognized authority can guarantee the peace. At the same time, liberals have tended to regard the state with suspicion. After all, power wielded in behalf of the governed might as easily be used to oppress them. Revolutionary pamphleteer Tom Paine captured the essence of the liberal dilemma when he wrote in *Common Sense* that "society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil."

Today's self-styled "libertarians" draw upon this traditional liberal ambivalence toward government to deliver a harsh critique of the modern state. Pointing at Washington, they charge that the Lockean guarantor of life and property has grown into the biggest thief of all. They portray the state as a proud and grossly swollen leviathan wreaking havoc in the economy and arbitrarily invading the rights of its citizens. Libertarians prefer their government bound and the marketplace unfettered. Personal freedom is their highest political value, realized through the absence of formal constraints on individual behavior. That largely accounts for their virulent antistatism and also explains why they so highly prize free-market capitalism. Unlike government, which ultimately relies on coercion, the market operates on the principle of voluntarism—at least in a purely formal sense. This is enough to satisfy the libertarian notion of freedom. Obsessed with the coercive state, libertarians are oblivious to the effects of inequality in the market that can translate so-called "negative liberty" into the virtual negation of liberty for the economically disadvantaged.

Generally speaking, libertarians divide into two camps. One camp, composed of "minarchists," favors a constitutionally limited minimal government akin to the night-watchman state of the last century. The other, calling itself "anarcho-capitalist," considers even the minimal state too much to bear and instead proposes a variety of anarchism in which private police forces and private courts compete for clients in a free market. The debate between the camps may seem fanciful to an observer, but the participants are in deadly earnest. An unlikely amount of ink has been spilled in argument over the likelihood of war among competing private police forces and in disputing the feasibility of a privately owned nuclear deterrent.

In fact, libertarian proposals to turn over at least nonessential government services to the private sector have met with approval in many quarters. It is even possible to find small experiments of a more radical nature. Today in California, private courts, operating under a long-neglected nineteenth-century statute, dispense civil justice for a fee to litigants desiring greater privacy or speed than can be had in the public court system. Their decisions are given force by the state. Private "police" like the Pinkertons are well known and have existed alongside their public counterparts for many years. Libertarian schemes, then, are not necessarily absurd, though they are certainly of dubious practicality. It remains to be asked what would become of the poor once essential public services are privatized. Salem, Arkansas, where volunteer firefighters watched as a house burned to the ground because its owner had not paid his $20 annual fee, provides an

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ominous foretaste of what we might expect.

It will come as no surprise that true-believing ideologues abound in the libertarian movement. Yet, however absurd or anachronistic it may seem, libertarianism is no refugee from the lunatic fringe of academic discourse. Thanks largely to Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, published in 1974, libertarian concerns occupy a prominent place in the world of contemporary political philosophy. (Nozick's book, famous as a reply to John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, should also be read as a minarchist refutation of the anarcho-capitalist position.) Moreover, libertarian rhetoric has re-emerged in American electoral politics, most notably through Ronald Reagan, and it appears to possess considerable appeal.

Perhaps the best measure of libertarian strength is the electoral record of the Libertarian party (LP). In 1972, the year of its founding, the LP was able to place its presidential candidate, philosopher John Hospers, on the ballot in only two states. He won a mere 5,000 popular votes. Eight years later LP candidate Ed Clark was listed on the ballot in all fifty states and polled just over a million votes nationwide. In less than a decade the LP had established itself as the third-largest political party in the United States. Optimistic leaders predicted major party status before the year 2000.

Libertarian Ideology

AT FIRST GLANCE the Libertarian platform reveals a seeming ideological eclecticism. Its economic planks are decidedly conservative, calling for an end to the welfare state and full deregulation of the economy. On defense, however, it parts company with the conservatives by proposing to reduce the military establishment to a minimal defensive force and insisting on termination of all foreign commitments. Neo-isolationists, the libertarians also demand that the United States withdraw from the United Nations. Finally, in opposition to New Right moralism, libertarians call for the repeal of all laws touching on private morality. They would legalize the "victimless crimes" of prostitution, gambling, and the sale and use of narcotics, activities which might be described in Nozick's phrase as capitalist acts among consenting adults. By joining economic libertarianism with civil libertarianism and antimilitarism, libertarians claim to have moved politics beyond the conventional dialogue between left and right.

It might be more accurate to say that they have pitted the Old Right against the New Right. Libertarians take their principles from the likes of Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, and Albert Jay Nock, leading critics of socialism abroad and the New Deal at home in the 1930s. Historically speaking, their stern rejection of paternalistic statism in the Western democracies was provoked at least in part by the example of totalitarianism recently arrived in Europe. Intellectually, these spokesmen for the Old Right represent a bygone era in American politics when conservatism was defined by adherence to the principles of classical Old-World liberalism. As historian George Nash recounts, the antistatism of the Old Right was partially eclipsed after the Second World War by the emergence of a new generation of conservatives obsessed with fighting communism.[1]

The New Right of the 1950s retained the economic libertarianism of its predecessor, but welcomed the enhancement of the state's military and police powers to combat enemies foreign and domestic. The still more recent New Right of Jerry Falwell and Ronald Reagan has added a strong dose of religious moralism to conservative ideology. Although they, too, profess to abhor Big Government and especially government intervention in the marketplace, they have no qualms about recommending state action to protect endangered "family values."

What distinguishes the Libertarian party is its consistent antistatism. Libertarians shun domestic moralism and cold-war militarism for the same reasons they condemn the welfare state. In their view, once government strays from the tasks of protecting life and property, it inevitably becomes a threat to both. Hence the party's opposition to military adventures and its support of abortion rights and gay rights. Libertarians hope that their unorthodox

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mix of economic and cultural laissez-faire will attract a diverse constituency from across the political spectrum united in its desire to be left alone by the state. The end result, however, may well turn out to be a political formula calculated to alienate conservatives and liberals alike.

SOME OF THE STRONGEST ATTACKS on libertarian politics have come from the right. The *National Review* routinely meets libertarian proposals with derision. Ernest van den Haag, in an especially vituperative article, describes the libertarian critique of state power as naive and accuses libertarians of being soft on communism.[2] It is not difficult to imagine an equally stinging rebuke from the Moral Majority. No defense of personal freedom that protects pornography, homosexuality, and abortion is likely to overcome the New Right's fears for the survival of the patriarchal family or allay its concern over the decline of Christian values in public life.

Yet the promise of freedom that libertarianism holds out to nonconformists and moral dissidents will not bear close scrutiny. While libertarians oppose state-sponsored discrimination, they have nothing to say about discrimination in the marketplace. On the contrary, they maintain that employers, for example, are well within their rights to refuse someone a job on account of that person's race, religion, gender, or sexual preference. State-mandated affirmative action is, of course, condemned as an unwarranted invasion of individual rights. Libertarians casually assume that the profit motive will dispel prejudice in time. Such confidence in the ultimate triumph of economic rationality suggests an astonishing degree of naïveté. It is puzzling that libertarians who can imagine a market catering to every conceivable taste and life style cannot envision a market for prejudice as well.

A similar naïveté is to be observed in their failure to come to grips with the role of the modern corporation. Though acutely sensitive to the use and abuse of power by the state, libertarians are oblivious to the exercise of economic power by giant national and multinational corporations. The stark inequality that defines the relationship between the employee and the corporate employer or the consumer and the corporate provider creates a dependency far more insidious and more widely spread throughout society than any plan for government patronage yet imagined. And still libertarians insist that the absence of physical coercion in the workplace and in the market leaves the wage-dependent worker perfectly free and grants the passive consumer a kind of sovereignty over production. Libertarians routinely portray the modern corporation as simply a larger version of the small shopkeeper familiar to classical economic theory. Denied the assistance of government (which alone has the power to create economic privilege), the corporation, they assert, would no more be able to defy market forces or dictate to the rest of society than could the baker, butcher, and brewer in Adam Smith's celebrated illustration of the invisible hand.

The conservative bias inherent in libertarianism is perhaps most clearly revealed in its reduction of civil rights to property rights. The right of free speech, for example, according to libertarian theorist Murray Rothbard, is nothing more than the individual's right to own or rent a hall in which to give a speech. The would-be speaker unable to afford a hall or unable to find a willing landlord is simply out of luck. Nonetheless, Rothbard tells us emphatically, the disappointed speaker's right of free speech has not been violated.[3] (Rothbard gives no sign of recognizing the irony of his account.) In a world marked by inequality and intolerance—that is, in the world we know—persons without property would effectively be without rights under a libertarian regime.

The conservative tilt to libertarianism betrays its origins as a political movement. In the 1950s libertarians were scarcely organized and the "movement" consisted of scattered circles of right-wing individualists who went to school on Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* and other anticollectivist tracts. Their major journal was *The Freeman*, edited by John Chamberlain and Henry Hazlitt, a successor of sorts to Albert Jay Nock's *Freeman* of three decades earlier. Essays by Hayek, Mises, and other

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veteran anti-New Dealers were the staple fare. The polemical novels of Ayn Rand provided yet another source of inspiration. Less scholastic than Hayek and the others, Rand's heroic portrayal of capitalism was especially popular with high school and college students. In the 1960s her Objectivist movement, a vehicle for the quasi-libertarian philosophy propounded in her novels, spread across college campuses and would serve as a bridge to libertarianism for many of her disciples.

History of the Party

THE FIRST ATTEMPT to create a national libertarian movement was sponsored by Murray Rothbard through his proposed Radical Libertarian Alliance (RLA). Rothbard, a professional economist trained by Mises and for a time a member of Rand's inner circle, was a veteran libertarian activist. His hopes for the RLA were dashed at the group's very first convention when the meeting broke up amid sectarian disputes. A year earlier Rothbard had published an appeal to the New Left in the pages of *Ramparts* calling for a left-right coalition against the war in Vietnam. His opening to the left fell flat, but a similar antiwar appeal helped foment a split in the conservative Young Americans for Freedom and converted former Goldwater aide Karl Hess to libertarianism.

The libertarian movement finally became viable with the founding of the Libertarian party in 1972. The party was the creation of a small group of renegade Young Republicans who left the GOP over Nixon's imposition of wage and price controls. In the 1970s the LP and the movement benefited greatly from the support of millionaire industrialist Charles Koch. (Koch, whose father had been a member of the John Birch Society, embraced libertarianism after reading Mises's dense tome, *Human Action.*) Largely thanks to Koch's generosity, a host of new libertarian organizations and publications made their appearance. Some of these, like the Students for a Libertarian Society and the Council for a Competitive Economy, were extremely short-lived. Others, including the *Libertarian Review*, a magazine for the movement, and *Inquiry*, a slick semimonthly intended for a general audience, are still in business. The Cato Institute, founded in 1976 as a libertarian alternative to the liberal Brookings Institution and the conservative American Enterprise Institute, continues to churn out a steady stream of position papers.

It is difficult to say much about the rank and file of the libertarian movement. Demographic studies simply do not exist. Electoral support for the LP, though large by third-party standards, is still too slight to register in the national voting studies. The geography of the libertarian vote shows that the party is strongest in the West, especially in California. (In 1978 the libertarian gubernatorial candidate in California received nearly 400,000 votes, the best showing for any third-party candidate there in almost three decades.) Anecdotal information, though grossly unreliable, suggests a constituency composed primarily of young professionals. Though unsubstantiated by hard data, this assessment seems entirely plausible given the libertarian equation of personal freedom with the individual's right to any life style he or she can afford. The blatant selfishness of libertarian politics may well be its strongest selling point. It can hardly be mere coincidence that libertarianism emerged politically in the Me Decade.

IF THIS READING of the movement's appeal is correct, the typical libertarian voter might turn out to be a yuppie not so much frightened by the specter of totalitarianism as resentful of the high taxes, redistributive programs, and paternalistic measures that threaten his/her style of life. A recent study of ideology in the electorate published by the libertarian Cato Institute allows us at least a partial test of this hypothesis.[4] William Maddox and Stuart Lilie employed national opinion data from the Center for Political Studies of the University of Michigan and the National Opinion Research Center to search for libertarian sympathies in the general population. (Their data base does not identify self-declared libertarians, and so cannot be used to characterize the movement's actual constituency.) For their purposes Maddox and Lilie devised four ideological categories—libertarian, liberal, conservative, and populist—and assigned respondents according

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to their attitudes toward government intervention in the economy and the expansion of personal freedoms. Persons categorized as libertarians expressed support for the expansion of freedoms but were opposed to government manipulation of the economy. "Liberals" expressed support for both positions, "conservatives" were against both, and "populists" answered in the reverse of libertarians.

Libertarian Demographics

IT CLEARLY EMERGES from the Maddox-Lilie study that libertarianism, as they define it, is an upper-middle class phenomenon. The authors use three measures of class: respondents' self-identification, income, and education. The percentage of respondents identifying themselves as middle class among the libertarians outnumbered working-class self-identifiers two to one throughout the period surveyed. In contrast, the percentages for each class were roughly equal among both liberals and conservatives, while populists tilted toward the working class. The distribution of ideologies across income levels offers an even more striking contrast. As Maddox and Lilie note for the 1980 data, the proportion of libertarian supporters increased dramatically along with annual income. "Almost nonexistent in the lower levels, libertarianism claims the support of significant minorities [8 to 14 percent] in the middle-income brackets (defined as the range between $10,000 to $19,999 per year), about 20 percent of those with upper-middle incomes ($20,000 to $34,999), and the lion's share (36 percent) of those with incomes over $35,000 per year."[5] Conservatives claimed only 15 percent of the highest income bracket, populists a mere 11 percent. Liberals, who drew support evenly from all income levels, received roughly one-quarter of the top bracket.

The data for education show libertarianism to be most popular among the most highly educated respondents. For 1980, 34 percent of those claiming an advanced degree and 32 percent with a college degree were classified as libertarians. Only liberals displayed a similar pattern, while conservatives received under one-fifth of the college-educated respondents and populists less than one-tenth. Libertarians and liberals were also found to be younger than conservatives and populists. More than half of those classified as libertarians in 1980 and over two-thirds of those designated liberals were under 41 years of age. These data would appear to lend credence to the notion advanced earlier that the libertarian constituency is primarily composed of young professionals. The Maddox-Lilie study further suggests that the libertarian constituency is almost entirely white (96 percent in the 1980 sample).

Looking forward to a libertarian realignment in American politics, Maddox and Lilie optimistically point to the steady increase of libertarian respondents in their sample between 1972 and 1980. In that period libertarian representation almost doubled, rising from 9.4 percent of the sample population to 17.7 percent. The profile of libertarian sympathizers that emerges from their study, however, suggests an elite constituency of limited size. Indeed, there is little if anything in their data on which to build hopes for a mass movement. Nor does their study contain evidence of electoral realignment even among those said to be ideologically attuned to libertarianism. In 1972 three-quarters of those identified as libertarians by Maddox and Lilie voted for Richard Nixon. In 1976 and again in 1980, despite the presence of an LP candidate in the race, two-thirds of the designated "libertarians" in the sample cast their ballots for the Republican candidate. In 1976, only 4 percent of these failed to vote for either Ford or Carter, and in 1980 Independent John Anderson and all other minor party candidates (including the Libertarian party's Ed Clark) shared 17 percent of the sample's libertarian respondents. While almost half of the libertarians in the sample claimed no party affiliation in 1980, 38 percent identified themselves as Republicans and 43 percent described themselves as ideological conservatives.

If the Libertarian party's actual share of the electorate is taken as a measure of political influence, libertarianism is in decline. In 1984 the LP presidential ticket appeared on the ballot in just thirty-nine states and the party's popular vote total dropped to 228,000, a poorer

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showing than in 1976. Ironically, the waning of the LP coincides with Ronald Reagan's conservative crusade against Big Government. No doubt Reagan cut heavily into the libertarian vote. His economic policies and antistatist rhetoric play to the same constituency. Moreover, his own ideological affinity for libertarianism is reflected in the appointment of libertarian activists to important White House posts. Doug Bandow, former editor of *Inquiry*, served as special assistant to the president for policy development between 1981 and 1982. Economist William Niskanen sat on the Council of Economic Advisers before leaving the administration to assume command of the Cato Institute.

It would be a mistake, however, to overestimate libertarian influence on the Reagan White House or to confuse what has been called the Reagan Revolution with the libertarian agenda. Reaganism is better understood as a New Right cocktail, an apparently intoxicating blend of laissez-faire, anticommunism, and traditionalism that has made drunkards of the electorate. The success of the New Right testifies that the popular revolt against the modern state is not born of a simple passion for the free market or a desire to be left alone to do one's own thing. Its preoccupation with the bogeys of secular humanism and evolution is symptomatic of deep-seated cultural anxieties and the resentment felt by local communities toward distant, imperious bureaucrats and their "alien" values. When Reagan affirms the biblical foundation of all political wisdom, endorses "creation science," or refers to abortion as the "murder" of the unborn, he sides with these estranged middle Americans against the cosmopolitan elite that has long controlled the nation's power structure. Reaganism and the New Right amount less to a rejection of statism *per se* than to a repudiation of the symbolic content of modern American government. This is what sociologists call "status politics," less a conflict of economic or political interests than a competition over values at the core of public life.[6]

New right politics and libertarianism reveal their differences even where they appear to have most in common, in the area of economic policy. While they agree on the superiority of capitalism as an economic system, they have strikingly different attitudes regarding its virtue. Libertarian theorists like Nozick and Hayek deny the free market any special moral content. Rather, the market is said to accommodate all moralities equally well, so long as they observe the procedural constraints governing market transactions. It is precisely this tolerance of a wide variety of moral preferences and their associated life styles that makes the libertarian defense of the market so attractive. New Right champions of the market like George Gilder and Jerry Falwell, on the other hand, invest capitalism with a specific moral content that reflects the teachings of fundamentalist Christianity. (Falwell discovers capitalism to be expressly sanctioned by the Bible.) The economic moralism of the New Right reflects once again its concern with individual character and the moral tone of public life. In its view the marketplace is a major theater for civic education and cannot be regarded as ethically neutral.

Ideologically, libertarianism and the New Right supply a chorus of voices singing the praises of free-market capitalism; yet, though the lyrics are quite often shared, they follow inharmonious scores. The resulting cacophony signals not just their political differences, but suggests that each side intends its song for a different audience. Libertarian themes sound the complaints of a wealthy, well-educated middle-class constituency unhappy over the cost and paternalistic inclination of the modern state. Radically individualistic, unabashedly hedonistic, libertarians epitomize the cosmopolitan spirit of modern society. They reject the authority of tradition in social practice just as they rebel against the tradition of authority in politics. In contrast, the New Right articulates the anger and frustration of a less well educated, lower-middle class constituency that has risen in defense of its traditional world view. New Right spokesmen have no sympathy for the social anarchy at the heart of the libertarian vision. They attack the modern state for what they suppose to be its role in the dissolution of customary social norms. They seek to control the state in order to use its

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powers to reverse the damage that has been done and to preserve tradition in the face of modernity.

PERHAPS THE CLEAREST INDICATION of the cultural divide that separates libertarianism from the New Right is to be found in the significance each gives to religion. Religion is the cement that binds the New Right constituency and the vital force that animates its members.[7] Libertarianism, by contrast, is a thoroughly secular doctrine. In the Maddox-Lilie study, libertarians showed a higher percentage of respondents with no religious preference than any other group except liberals. Religion, especially as employed by the politicized preachers of the New Right, is a powerful symbol of institutionalized morality and can be an effective instrument for policing communal norms. In the United States, which lacks the discipline of a traditional class structure, religion has always served this regulatory social function. The decline of religious authority under the pressures of modernization gave rise to the Christian fundamentalism that currently feeds New Right politics. (The paradox of the New Right is that it relies on a sophisticated electronic ministry and draws support from a constituency at home with space-age technology even as it rebels against "nihilistic" modernism.) In the symbolic war between traditional faith and contemporary relativism, libertarian ideology represents everything the New Right holds in contempt.

There is more to be gleaned from this point than further evidence of factional disputes on the right. Libertarianism is not unfairly characterized as an expression of American individualism run amok. Although a minor political movement, it is no cultural anomaly. Rather, it seems in keeping with the trend observed by Christopher Lasch, who believes that contemporary American culture has carried the logic of individualism "to the extreme of a war of all against all." In a similar vein, the authors of *Habits of the Heart*, a recent study of individualism and commitment in American life, worry that American individualism "may have grown cancerous."[8] What disturbs these analysts is the possibility that social bonds may have decayed beyond the point of providing the individual with any sense of membership in a corporate body. In the tradition of French sociologist Emile Durkheim, they perceive anomie as the psychological consequence of social atomism. And, in the tradition of Karl Marx, they attribute the dissolution of established social conventions and the atomization of society to the influence of liberal capitalism.

Ending with Locke

LIBERTARIANS DIFFER with these critics less in their analysis than in their conclusions. Libertarianism presents the triumph of naked self-interest as a milestone on the road to human freedom. So-called "excessive" individualism leading to the decline of family, church, and community is taken as a sign of the new social order born of respect for each person's individuality. The end of libertarian politics resembles nothing so much as Locke's hypothetical starting point, the state of nature, where autonomous men and women invent and initiate the social compact. Lockean nature is in many ways analogous to the free market projected by libertarian theorists. Its denizens enjoy perfect liberty, interacting voluntarily for the satisfaction of their various wants and needs. For Locke nature represented a prepolitical world, an anarchical condition made intolerable by the prospect of social chaos; to libertarian theorists it appears to be a model of the world after politics, a vision of the self-regulating society that awaits the abolition of the state.

The new state of nature suggested by libertarian schemes for less or no government (amounting in effect to the privatization of the public realm) is a highly romanticized version of the Lockean original. Seemingly enchanted by the market model of human psychology, libertarians routinely overestimate the role of instrumental rationality in human conduct. As a consequence, the libertarian universe is peopled by exceedingly cool enthusiasts whose passion for liberty stops short of any emotion that would dissolve the boundary of rights protecting each from the others. Visited with libertarian grace, saints and sinners can sit down together with mutual forbearance of one

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another's life styles. It is a fundamental assumption of libertarian politics that warring values will not produce actual warfare if the would-be combatants can no longer hope to enlist the state on their side. In the libertarian view of things, values are just another commodity and the market has room for all. That people in the real world do fight over religious differences and other "irrational" objects, even where the state is neutral, seems mysterious to libertarian thinkers, a symptom perhaps of the false consciousness that will pass away with the state. Heeding the prophecy of Ayn Rand, libertarians appear confident that the future belongs to the rational egoist—economic man unbound.

THE NONECONOMIC BEHAVIORS that so puzzle libertarian theorists, behaviors associated with religious fanaticism and rabid nationalism that will not meet the economist's test of rationality, have always disturbed and often frightened liberal thinkers. Here we encounter emotions—akin to madness in Hobbes's view—that have the power to overturn rights, property, and even to sweep away individual identity as the zealot becomes one with the mob. Ultimately, the integrity of the entire liberal edifice depends upon the psychic insulation protecting the bourgeois personality from the political effects of such dangerous emotions. It is small wonder that classical liberalism preaches separation of church and state and insists on adherence to the impersonal rule of law. Libertarianism, self-declared heir to the legacy of classical liberalism, takes these and other hard-won political victories for granted.

Overconfidence of Liberalism

SUCH NAÏVETÉ is symptomatic in a much broader sense of the overconfidence of the liberal tradition in America. The United States, as Louis Hartz contends, is surely the Lockean polity par excellence. It is Hartz's thesis that in America Lockean claims regarding human nature, natural rights, and the ends of politics take on the quality of "givenness." What were originally advanced as hypothetical constructs and contested concepts come to be viewed in the American mainstream as the natural order of things. This causes all non-Lockean politics, whether the nostalgia for feudalism evinced by George Fitzhugh in the nineteenth century, or the godly politics of seventeenth-century Puritan divines, or for that matter the status politics of twentieth-century fundamentalists, to appear marginal when viewed from the center. In fact these seeming aberrations are better understood as the obverse of America's Lockean consensus. Their emphasis on communal solidarity addresses the void in American political life encouraged by liberal atomism. Libertarianism, on the other hand, carries American liberalism to its logical extreme, transforming neglect of community into a conscious assault on the affective ties that hold society together.

As a political movement libertarianism owes its life to middle-class discomfort over the swelling of government in the 1960s and a series of unhappy events (the agony of Vietnam, the scandal of Watergate) that damaged the credibility of the state and caused it to suffer a loss of public esteem. Taking a longer-term, structural perspective, it can be said that the modern American state invites disaffection through its brokerage relationship to the plethora of special interests. Lacking any set of criteria by which to define the public interest, government struggles to meet virtually every demand placed upon its limited resources with sufficient political intensity. This, as several students of contemporary government have observed, is a sure recipe for failure and explains the incoherence of public policy.

THE SEEMINGLY INESCAPABLE tendency toward pork-barrel politics that entraps the modern state and ultimately works to undermine its legitimacy is in the end a reflection of America's liberal political culture, which has always understood the general welfare in terms of the satisfaction of private interests. As Theodore Lowi points out in *The End of Liberalism*, American liberalism entails a conception of politics modeled on the invisible hand of the marketplace; competition among selfish interests is believed to be self-regulating in such a way as to maximize everyone's well-being. Though essentially a nineteenth-century vision, it remains in force today, limiting the more

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powerful twentieth-century state to the role of a political broker. The contemporary legitimation crisis in America, therefore, is in large measure a product of the country's Lockean past.

Libertarian analysts, however, mistake the liberal character of modern government. In their view its guiding spirit belongs not to Locke but to de Maistre or Stalin. As a remedy for the nation's ills, libertarians strenuously urge a return to liberal first principles; but this is a fanciful cure for an imaginary disease. Libertarianism, which fails as a mass political movement because at bottom it does not understand the cultural sources of so much popular opposition to Big Government, fails also in its critique of the modern state because it cannot distinguish the social welfare policies of a liberal democracy from the totalitarian road to serfdom. Ultimately libertarianism neither transcends nor resolves the dilemmas that plague contemporary American politics. Rather, it proposes a self-centered flight from political choice to a utopian, self-regulating market society. Like the novels of Ayn Rand, this is simply escapist fantasy dressed up as political theory. In the real world, ironically, libertarianism lends support to a Reaganite politics that is repressive in spirit and often statist in practice. □

Notes

[1] George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

[2] Ernest van den Haag, "Libertarians and Conservatives," *National Review*, June 8, 1979.

[3] Murray Rothbard, *For a New Liberty, The Libertarian Manifesto*, revised edition (New York: Collier Books, 1978), pp. 42-44.

[4] William S. Maddox and Stuart A. Lilie, *Beyond Liberal and Conservative: Reassessing the Political Spectrum* (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1984).

[5] Ibid., p. 85.

[6] See Jerome L. Himmelstein, "The New Right," in Robert C. Liebman and Robert Wuthnow, eds., *The New Christian Right* (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1983); also, the essay by John H. Simpson, "Moral Issues and Status Politics," in the same volume. On the concept of status politics, see Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1963), especially ch. 7.

[7] See James L. Guth, "The New Christian Right," in Liebman and Wuthnow, *The New Christian Right*; James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelism: Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983); and in a more hysterical tone, Daniel C. Maquire, *The New Subversives: Anti-Americanism of the Religious Right* (New York: Continuum, 1982).

[8] Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), p. xv; Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. viii.

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Karl Frieden

Public Needs and Private Wants

Making Choices

Few beliefs are more deeply embedded in American popular wisdom than those concerning the inefficiency of government. In an era when liberals, moderates, and conservatives find little basis for common cause, criticizing government's performance is a unifying ritual. The public sector particularly suffers in comparison to the private sector, which is viewed as less wasteful, more bottom-line oriented, and more attuned to shifting consumer demands.

National opinion polls capture the magnitude of public dissatisfaction with both the means and ends of government. By margins of greater than five to one, Americans believe that the public sector is run less efficiently than the private sector, and that government employees work less diligently than do their private counterparts. When asked how much of federal government spending is wasted, the median response is nearly 50 percent. By wide majorities, Americans also believe that government is more responsible than is business for low productivity, slow economic growth, and high inflation.[1]

A shared perception that government is less efficient than the private sector does not mean that Americans are in complete accord on the appropriate role for government. Liberals tend to have less faith in the market than conservatives, and are more willing to have government guarantee a certain level of health, education, and welfare, irrespective of market outcomes. Although demand for government services rises and falls depending on the prevailing political and economic climates, a negative view of government efficiency inhibits a nation from committing itself to collective action. For conservatives, it renews their faith in individual initiative and the market sphere. For liberals, it undermines their resolve in government, and shifts to them the burden of proof for any new initiatives in the social sphere.

As dissatisfaction with the performance of government increased over the post-World War II era, the number of Americans describing themselves as liberals dropped almost in half. The most notable affirmation of this trend was the election of Ronald Reagan, surely the most anti-government president in the last half century. Reagan masterfully exploited the widespread discontent with the public sector, portraying big government as the single greatest cause of inflation, unemployment, energy shortages, family breakups, crime, and national insolvency. The president's philosophy of government was neatly encapsulated by his statement, "I've always felt the nine most terrifying words in the English language are 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help.'"[2]

Dissatisfied with a public sector regarded as wasteful and overreaching, Americans reversed the postwar trend that allocated an increasing share of societal resources to public needs. According to conventional wisdom, a growing awareness of the limits of government action and the benefits of a less regulated market sphere led Americans to embrace policies aimed at contracting the public sphere, except for national defense, and expanding the market sphere.

There is, however, another plausible interpretation of recent trends. It is possible that we are mistaking the higher degree of complexity and controversy characteristic of nonmarket tasks with inefficiencies in government. Is government less efficient than the private sector, or are there qualities in the tasks assigned to government that make its goals more difficult to achieve? Is government too big, or are we inclined to overvalue market consumption be-

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cause it is easier to fulfill individual demands than to satisfy collective wants?

There is certainly much that government has to answer for in terms of efficiency and accountability. Citizens have the right to expect that the public sector perform its functions with more dispatch, more frugality, more kindness, and more respect for individuality. The negative public attitude toward government, however, derives not so much from the public sector's divergence from efficiency in general, but from its perceived departure from private-sector norms. If our low regard for government is justified, then we are probably getting the balance of public needs and private wants that is socially desirable. If the differences, however, between nonmarket and market output on the one hand, and collective and individual consumption on the other, bias our evaluation of public-sector efficiency, then it is possible that we are underinvesting in public needs and overspending on private wants.

Roots of the Stereotype

THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN THE UNITED STATES is engaged almost exclusively in providing nonmarket output. The private sector produces computers, automobiles, fast food, and other goods and services that lend themselves to profitable market transactions. This leaves government with only those tasks that are incapable of being neatly packaged, stripped of political content, and sold over the counter to individual consumers. The separation of the public sector from the market sphere is so complete that government provides less than three percent of all goods and services sold to individuals in market transactions (primarily postal services and rapid transit, which can't be operated profitably by private companies).

While the private sector accommodates our diverse and fragmented demands for market consumption, government restores the whole by filling gaps, resolving conflicts, balancing competing demands, and sustaining that portion of human needs that does not reduce itself to marketable commodities. As a result, government's responsibilities encompass the most difficult and intractable of society's problems. These include maintaining the delicate ecological balance of the environment in a time of technological revolution; preserving world peace in the face of a nuclear arms arsenal capable of destroying human civilization many times over; moderating and containing unpredictable and volatile business cycles; eliminating poverty or at least reducing market-generated disparities in income and wealth; educating and socializing the nation's youth; and reducing racism, sexism, and other deep-rooted human behaviors.

The very characteristics that remove certain outputs from the market sphere complicate the delivery of public goods and services. Market products can be limited in scope, isolated from other output, and evaluated by a uniform bottom line (profits), but nonmarket output tends to be less well-defined, with more open-ended goals, interdependent outcomes, and ambiguous performance criteria.

THE ABILITY OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR to mass produce many of its goods is a striking confirmation of how tangible and apolitical market output can be. Refrigerators, french fries, and hair dryers are suitable for assembly-line mass production, while education, consumer regulation, and police protection are not. As the institution responsible for conflict resolution, government must necessarily tolerate a greater level of politics and bureaucratic due process than the private sector.

Instead of recognizing that the tasks assigned to government are unsuited for market production, we condemn government for its inability to conform to the criteria of the market sphere. We are likely, for instance, to compare the performance of a private firm, such as General Motors, in manufacturing automobiles, with that of a public agency, such as an urban public school system, in educating inner-city schoolchildren. The real test of relative efficiency, however, is whether General Motors, or some other private firm, could manage the public school system more effectively. Would private management overcome the problems caused by high minority enrollment, declining pools of qualified teachers, white flight to the suburbs, conflicting objectives over social values and educational goals, or the flatness of employee incentive structures?

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Moreover, could a private firm achieve these objectives in a way that wouldn't violate widely held beliefs on individual rights and self-governance?

It might come as a surprise that the negative disposition toward government in the United States is rooted in something as mundane as a misbegotten comparison. Any litany of public dissatisfactions with government, however, reveals a blurring of the innate problems of the nonmarket sphere with perceived incompetence in public-sector performance. The most popular criticism of government is that it operates in the absence of market-like pressures. Less market exposure is thought to weaken government operations relative to the private sector, by removing incentives that reduce costs and foster operating efficiency. We look at government and we see no bottom line, no competitive pressure, no threat of bankruptcy, and no self-interest-driven motivation.

The flaw in this logic is that it confuses the characteristics of nonmarket output with inefficiencies in government. The public sector operates in the absence of market exposure because the output assigned to government does not lend itself to market exchange. It is simply unfeasible to transform national defense, criminal justice, environmental regulation, and similar government outputs into commodities to be bought and sold in the marketplace.

Although the public and private sectors typically operate in distinct spheres of the economy, there is undeniably a certain degree of overlap. Both sectors operate schools, hospitals, parks, mental institutions, law offices, and rental housing. But the similarity in functions masks a fundamental difference in clientele that is prejudicial to government.

Where overlaps occur, public services invariably cater to less affluent households than do private services. Virtually all of the thirty-five million Americans who live below the poverty line, the so-called "Other America," populate public services. The channeling of the poor and lower-middle class to public services occurs either de jure (income-based means tests used in public housing, Head Start child care, legal aid, welfare) or de facto (the inability of less affluent Americans to purchase more expensive and restricted private education, housing, and recreational facilities). Private firms can sell these services to customers in market transactions, while government cannot.

The fact that poor people populate public services in numbers disproportionate to their presence in society has not gone unrecognized. Nonetheless, the burdensome impact of a less affluent clientele on public services, and its role in fostering a negative image of government, have been largely ignored. Given the choice, Americans will invariably choose private hospitals over public hospitals, private housing over public housing, and private country clubs over city playgrounds. The desirability of private services, however, has less to do with the efficiency of the private sector than with widespread awareness that private services offer higher-priced and more exclusive output.

In those instances where the public and private sectors operate under similar circumstances, the available evidence does not confirm the superiority of private enterprise. For instance, where private firms provide goods and services such as nursing home care, scientific research, or weapons manufacture on contract to the government, they are subject to many of the constraints of the nonmarket sphere, including more politics and red tape, and less clearly delineated bottom lines. Few would argue that companies like General Dynamics or Lockheed, whose biggest customer is the federal government, are models of efficiency. Where private firms operate outside the reach of market competition, their conduct changes, motivated by an incentive to maximize profits, but not to minimize costs.

Conversely, where government-owned corporations operate commercial ventures in a competitive marketplace, their behavior is more akin to that of private firms than to other government agencies. Experience in the United States is limited, but government-owned automobile firms (Renault, Volkswagen), aircraft manufacturers (Airbus), oil companies (British Petroleum, SNEA), and banks (Crédit Lyonnais, Westdeutsche

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Landesbank), have successfully competed in the international marketplace for decades. Particularly in economic sectors dominated by large corporations, where managerial control is divorced from ownership, market profits may be less important as a spur to private initiative than as a yardstick of firm performance and a means by which to balance supply and demand.

Empirical studies of the public and private sectors operating within similar market or nonmarket environments produce no clear-cut pattern. Public sector performance is sometimes better, sometimes worse, but by no means innately inferior to private-sector operations. This outcome reaffirms the need to distinguish between public and private manageability.

Divisiveness of Collective Consumption

THERE IS ANOTHER ASPECT OF EFFICIENCY that influences public opinion toward government. As citizens, we are interested not only in how much output the public and private sectors produce per level of input, but in which sector provides us with the output we most desire. While consideration of operational efficiency is swayed by differences between nonmarket and market output, appreciation of the output delivered by the public and private sectors is skewed by differences between collective and individual consumption.

Nonmarket output can only be purchased collectively by citizens. We can't place individual orders for soldiers or clean air as we can for toilet paper or vacuum cleaners. Collective consumption burdens government with a range of obligations that do not apply to individual market consumption. When we consume output together, we must consider how to satisfy the whole of society, not just individual households. When we pay for output collectively, we must cope with how to share the cost burden fairly.

In the absence of identical preferences, citizens will have to pay for government programs they support as well as for those they oppose, for benefits received directly and those paid out only to others. We may be just as divided over the value of particular market goods and services, but less conflict arises where individual choice can be exercised. The 67 percent of adult Americans who are nonsmokers need not purchase cigarettes, but the 63 percent of American households without school-age children must help finance public schools. Vegetarians can abstain from the average American consumption of 171 pounds of meat each year, but those opposed to the Reagan administration's military buildup must share in the more than $1,000 per person annual cost of America's armed forces. The political controversies that rage within the public sphere increase the likelihood that virtually all citizens will find themselves continuously dissatisfied with government, pleased with some of its actions, disgruntled by others.

THE MARKET SPHERE AVOIDS THE CONFLICTS of the political arena, not because the market provides each of us with exactly what we want, but because it is not expected to do so. There is no mechanism equivalent to the voting box that allows us to regularly pass judgment on the aggregation of individual consumer choices. There is no annual budget process that requires us to justify how much we spend on private wants. Accordingly, we evaluate market output on a narrower basis, reflecting only our own choices, not those of others.

The market sphere is also spared most of the controversy over the distribution of income and power that inflames public opinion toward government output. Equality of influence is absent from the market sphere, but less parity is expected. We may envy someone who can afford fancier vacations, larger automobiles, or more expensive furniture, but there is no "one person, one dollar" rule that raises expectations similar to democracy's "one person, one vote." Over 90 percent of the American public believes that every citizen should have an equal chance to influence government policy, but fewer than 10 percent support the notion of equality of outcome in the economic sphere.[8]

Appreciation of collective consumption also suffers because we are less aware of how much we are getting for our money. Unlike market output, which must be tangible enough to be packaged and sold over the counter to consumers in individual market transactions, nonmarket output is often abstract (protection of

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property rights), indirect (research and development subsidies), or not subject to immediate individual gratification (defense spending). The sheer volume of government output, totaling more than one trillion dollars, ensures that we will be less informed or appreciative of the benefits derived from our collective purchases than of our average household consumption of $20,000 in market goods and services.

The value of market goods and services is reinforced by the $88 billion spent annually by American companies to advertise their wares. With the exception of the military, no comparable effort is made to advertise the benefits of collective purchases. For instance, in 1985, the entire federal government spent $259 million on advertising, less than the amounts spent by Proctor & Gamble (1.6 billion), Sears Roebuck ($800 million), and thirty other individual corporations. Far more is expended to persuade the American public of the virtues of lite beer or Chicken McNuggets than of quality education or welfare programs.[4]

A citizen is far more likely to be dissatisfied with some portion of collectively consumed output than with market goods and services, regardless of whether he or she thinks the public sector should be expanded or contracted. While market consumers can make purchases in varied amounts to reflect differences in tastes, voters must typically consume identical levels of collective goods and services. It is much more difficult to please a constituency of 235 million (the nation) or even 100,000 (a medium-sized city), than it is to satisfy the individual households that select their own market output.

The inherent divisiveness of collective consumption helps explain why citizens tend to be programmatically progovernment, but ideologically antigovernment. Although opinion polls document wide support for many individual government programs, they also uncover deep dissatisfaction with government spending as a whole. Everyone seems to agree that government is too big. In 1980, on the eve of Ronald Reagan's election to his first term, this sentiment peaked with 78 percent of Americans believing that government wasted a lot of money, and only 2 percent thinking that not much was wasted. But even in 1985, after several years of rising confidence in government, 76 percent of Americans still believed that government wasted a lot of money.[5]

The intensity of citizen disaffection with government, however, may have less to do with the level of government waste than with how much more difficult it is to satisfy collective wants than individual desires. Regardless of their relative merits, market goods or services that can be purchased on an individual basis, without conflict over goals, ability-to-pay, or democratic procedures, are likely to be appreciated more than collective output. The need for collective consumption, however, arises precisely because individual market choice is unavailable or ineffective for fulfilling certain human wants.

In recent years, the notion that special interest groups and self-serving bureaucrats create pressures that inflate collective expenditures has dominated the debate over public spending and regulation. There has been virtually no consideration given to the countervailing influences that undermine public support for government output, causing us to overindulge on wants that can be fulfilled through market consumption, and underspend on needs that can be satisfied only through collective consumption.

Reinforcement of the Stereotype

The tendency to view government operations more critically than private-sector production is reinforced by the disproportionate scrutiny accorded to government. The public sector operates in a fishbowl, with everything that it does subject to close observation. Private companies are required to divulge only very general data about their operations. Public interest extends to details of life, personality, and conduct that in private business would never be of concern outside the organization.

News coverage of the public sector generally accounts for 50 percent or more of all television network news and 25 percent or more of newspaper coverage. In contrast, business news occupies less than 5 percent of network airtime and less than 10 percent of newspaper coverage.

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Lopsided coverage of public affairs is not necessarily prejudicial to government. It becomes so, however, because failure and controversy are more likely to attract attention than success or complacency. A routine police booking of a suspected criminal evokes little curiosity, but a case where police officers violate a prisoner's constitutional rights is of great interest. An army training exercise is not newsworthy, but a foulup in monitoring procurement contracts is given wide circulation. Even if the constant exposure of government waste or corruption serves a public purpose, it is likely to be misconstrued as evidence that government is less efficient or more corrupt than the private sector, rather than an indication that it is more closely watched.

For example, the Watergate scandal dominated the news in the early 1970s. Watergate was a front-page story in the *New York Times* every day except for three during May, June, and July 1973. Without minimizing its importance, the dirty tricks and subsequent coverup by the Nixon administration were hardly heinous crimes. They were never demonstrated to be symptomatic of the public sector, or related to self-enrichment like most other crimes. Nonetheless, the continuous stream of revelations and intense media coverage of Watergate gathered a momentum of its own, sharply reducing confidence in government operations.[6]

By contrast, corporate crime during the same era received relatively modest coverage. During the 1970s, one-quarter of the *Fortune* 500 companies were convicted of at least one major crime or paid civil penalties for serious misbehavior. Employee theft also increased from an estimated $16 billion in 1971 to $75 billion in 1980. Yet the pilferage, bribes, kickbacks, sales of trade secrets, and embezzlement received nowhere near the attention accorded to public-sector misdeeds.[7]

An analagous pattern emerged with the 1986 contragate scandal. Reports of the Iranian arms deal and the channeling of money to the *contras* in Nicaragua reached a fever pitch in late 1986 and early 1987. With new revelations dominating the airwaves and front pages, President Reagan's popularity declined precipitously, falling more than twenty-three points in one month, one of the sharpest drops ever recorded. At the same time the insider trading scandal on Wall Street, one of the biggest private-sector scandals in decades, was pushed off the front page, receiving less than one-fifth the coverage of the government scandal.

A similar paradox applies to inquiries into public and private sector waste. In 1982, President Reagan created a presidential commission headed by corporate executive Peter Grace to probe waste in government. The President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control, as it was officially known, lived up to its name, with only seven of its 161 members coming from outside the ranks of business. Another 2,000 corporate executives participated in the thirty-six task forces established to investigate different areas of federal government operations. For eighteen months, the commission's staff was given full access to internal documents detailing government operations and finances. The commission's report, released in 1984 with over 21,000 pages of documentation, received enormous coverage in the media, despite serious questions raised over its accuracy and impartiality.

No comparable effort has been attempted to investigate waste in the private sector. Can we imagine private companies cooperating with a group of government executives or labor union officials by providing complete access to confidential memorandums or proprietary financial data? If, for some reason, a wide-ranging probe was undertaken, can we conceive of private firms sanctioning the release of derogatory information to the public as freely as did the Reagan administration with the Grace Commission's findings?

The reinforcement of belief in government waste and corruption is so pervasive that it frequently overrides citizens' own experiences with government agencies. Several studies have determined that citizens who express satisfaction with their own direct encounters with government agencies still express disapproval in their general evaluation of overall government performance. Researchers at the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center, in a series of evaluations of performance in government service agencies, determined that 71

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percent of the clients reported a successful outcome in their own cases, while only 30 percent gave the government office good marks on being able to take care of problems generally; 80 percent felt they were treated fairly in personal encounters, compared to 42 percent who shared that view in their general evaluation; and 72 percent of the clients thought the agency had functioned efficiently for them, compared with 30 percent who gave government offices in general good marks on prompt service.[8]

NOT ONLY DO WE PAY MORE ATTENTION to what government does, but we tend to apply different performance criteria to public and private sector actions. While self-interested behavior (nepotism or high executive salaries) and conspicuous consumption (expense-account living and opulent office quarters) are roundly condemned in government, they are considered an acceptable part of doing business in the private sector.

As a result, what constitutes waste in government is not necessarily waste in the private sector. In government, to pay a top official a salary of $1,000,000 is in itself wasteful; to wine and dine customers with $100 lunches or luxury boxes at sports stadiums is excessive; to play favorites, selecting one's friends or relatives for jobs, is a violation of ethical standards. In the private sector, however, these actions can be justified by citing compelling business needs, or, alternatively, the right of an owner of private property to act as he sees fit. Not surprisingly, it is easier to satisfy efficiency criteria when there is no line above which expenditures are automatically treated as wasteful, and when the pursuit of self-interest is considered a virtue, not a vice.

Private companies remain relatively immune from scrutiny and exempt from criticism of their efficiency as long as they sustain profitability. Even widespread failure among individual firms is not necessarily equated with private-sector inefficiency. Rather it is considered part of a natural cleansing process in which the stronger firms survive and the weaker ones perish. Government has no such saving grace, as poor performance in one agency is not excused by good performance in another.

To be sure, public opinion of private-sector performance is not uniformly high. Business is consistently rated low in areas such as protecting the environment, caring about customers or employees as individuals, holding down prices or profits, and honesty in advertising. This predatory image of business, however, does not necessarily damage its reputation for efficiency. Indeed, since greed and self-interest are viewed as conducive to business success, awareness of anti-social behavior may actually reinforce a belief in private-sector efficiency.

Ramifications of these Beliefs

A STRONG TRADITION OF INDIVIDUALISM continues to hold great appeal to Americans. It affects our views toward government, both in its romantic notion of a nation of autonomous, self-interested producers and consumers, and through its impact on the way we utilize government. Where government operates in an environment hostile to collective action, and susceptible to manipulation by powerful private forces, its performance is likely to be less than optimal. Government may approach its objectives in a half-hearted, or ad-hoc manner; it may fail to adequately enforce regulations because of opposition from organized interest groups; it may rely too heavily on private contractors outside of its immediate control; it may channel too little money into universal social programs and too much into national defense. A one-dimensional view of government, however, that fails to take account of the overreach of the market sphere, is likely to blame the subpar performance on an innately incompetent public sector, rather than on an unduly powerful private sector.

The belief in government inefficiency is comforting because it suggests that we are better off if we do more on our own as individuals and less together as citizens. It would be convenient if most of our desires could be satisfied through autonomous individual action in the marketplace, or at home, free from the messy world of politics and collective decision making.

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However, we live in an era when the pursuit of narrow self-interest in an increasingly interdependent world appears ever more questionable, and the need to cope collectively with ecological disorders, global market competition, nonrenewable resource depletion, widening gaps between rich and poor nations, rapid technological change, and nuclear disarmament looms increasingly large. The very strength of market choice is its undoing when the need is not to narrow, but to broaden our vision; when the need is for social cohesion, not rugged individualism.

In many ways, government is merely a symbol for our willingness to act collectively, and a target for all the frustrations we encounter in doing so. It is not just collective action through government that suffers in the United States. We also have one of the weakest labor union movements in the Western world. Well over one-third and often one-half of the work forces in other advanced industrialized democracies belong to labor unions, but in the United States less than one-fifth are members.

A particularly disturbing corollary of our retreat from collective action is our attitude toward economic inequality and the less fortunate among us. Government is the major societal institution capable of altering market-generated inequalities, either directly through redistribution of income, or indirectly through rules and regulations imposed on market behavior. Our negative predisposition toward government reinforces our acceptance of gross disparities in income and wealth distribution. Belief in the legitimacy of income inequality as a tool to spur economic growth is far more prevalent among Americans than it is among people in other nations. This is evident even among groups one might expect to exhibit strong egalitarian tendencies.

For instance, a comparison of the views of leaders of the Social Democratic party in Sweden and the Democratic party in the United States reveals striking differences. While 58 percent of the Swedish leaders favored equal pay, only 12 percent of the Americans supported the goal. While 44 percent of the Swedes favored a top limit placed on salaries, only 17 percent of the Americans concurred. Even more startling, Swedish leaders considered a fair ratio between top and bottom earners—between top executives and dishwashers or elevator operators—to be two to one, compared with the fifteen-to-one ratio supported by American Democratic party leaders.[9]

Not surprisingly, the United States spends less on social welfare programs than do virtually all the other similarly affluent nations in Western Europe. Alone among the rich nations of the world, the United States lacks a national health insurance program. Less willing to use government as a redistributor of income, the United States ranks second to last among the major industrialized democracies in income equality.[10]

In the nineteenth century the French sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville noted that America was experiencing both faster growth and more widespread equality than Europe. Today, the situation is largely reversed. Even though the share of wealth owned by the top one-half of one percent of Americans has increased from 25 percent in 1963 to 27 percent in 1983, public discussion focuses on limiting the welfare state, not on its limitations.[11]

The value of the market need not be diminished for us to recognize the peril in assuming that what works for commodity production is equally suited for other tasks. It is one thing to be sobered by the difficulty of solving social problems or providing nonmarket output. It is quite another to conclude that government is to blame and market solutions are available as substitutes. The predictable result is a widening imbalance between public- and private-sector consumption. Thus the anomaly of an America with more racquetball clubs, but fewer public parks; more second homes, but less public housing for the homeless; more fast food outlets, but fewer public health dollars; fancier hotels, but decaying public works; more videocassette sales, but fewer school textbooks; cleaner swimming pools, but dirtier air.

These outputs are favored not because they are more desirable, but because they lend themselves more easily to market provision. The tendency toward overindulging on wants that can be fulfilled only through market consumption, and underspending on needs that

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can be satisfied only through collective consumption is a perversion of rational social choice. As long as we remain captivated, however, by simplistic and stereotypical views of government performance, this outcome will seem both legitimate and irreversible. □

Notes

[1] George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1972-1977* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1978); Roper Organization, Roger Seasonwein Associates, Cambridge Reports, Inc., and Louis Harris and Associates polls, cited in Seymour Martin Lipset and William Schneider, *The Confidence Gap: Business, Labor, and Government in the Public Mind* (New York: The Free Press, 1983) Chapter 9. Warren E. Miller, Arthur H. Miller, and Edward Schneider, *American National Election Studies Data Sourcebook: 1952-1978* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), esp. p. 258; George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1978, 1979* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1979).

[2] Between 1970 and 1984, the number of entering college freshmen describing themselves as liberals dropped by half as well. "Ideology: Where Have All The Liberals Gone?" *Public Opinion* (April/May 1985), p. 35; John Robinson, "The Ups and Downs and Ins and Outs of Ideology," *Public Opinion* (February/March 1984), p. 15.

[3] Herbert McClosky and John Zaller, *The American Ethos: Public Attitudes toward Capitalism and Democracy* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), pp. 74, 84; Sidney Verba and Gary R. Orren, *Equality in America: The View from the Top* (Cambridge Univ.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 253-256.

[4] U.S. Bureau of Census Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1986 (Washington, DC: 106th edition) pp. 551-552; "Hundred Leading National Advertisers," *Advertising Age*, September 4, 1986.

[5] Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, *1980 American National Elections Study*, Wave C-3 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Distributed by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research); "Opinion Roundup," *Public Opinion*, March-April 1987, p. 27.

[6] Samuel P. Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 189.

[7] Mark Green and John F. Berry, *The Challenge of Hidden Profits: Reducing Corporate Bureaucracy and Waste* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1985), p. 259; Robert B. Reich, *The Next American Frontier* (New York: Times Books, 1983), pp. 169-170.

[8] Daniel Katz, Barbara A. Gutek, Robert L. Kahn, and Eugenia Barton, *Bureaucratic Encounters: A Pilot Study in the Evaluation of Government Services* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Institute for Social Research, 1975), pp. 120-122.

[9] Sidney Verba and Gary R. Orren, *Equality In America: The View from the Top* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 255-56; similar results occur when labor leaders in Sweden and the United States are polled.

[10] Arnold J. Heidenheimer, Hugh Heclo, and Carolyn Teich Adams, *Comparative Public Policy: The Politics of Social Choice in Europe and America*, 2nd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), esp. pp. 19, 152, 202, and 204; 15 percent of Americans have no health insurance whatsoever. See: Census Bureau study for 1983, quoted in Robert Pear, "15% of Americans Found to Lack Health Coverage," the *New York Times*, February 18, 1985, p. A13.

[11] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1969). Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress, *The Concentration of Wealth in the United States*, 99th Congress (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986).

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The Mission That Failed

A Polish Courier Who Tried to Help the Jews

Jan Karski, proper name Jan Kozielewski, was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1914. He has lived in the United States since 1944, and is now a professor of government at Georgetown University. (Those who saw Claude Lanzmann's Shoah *will remember that during his interview Karski was so overcome with emotion that he had to leave the room to compose himself before returning to continue.) Before the war he graduated from Jan Kazimierz University in Lvov and began his career in the Polish Foreign Service. In 1939 he was drafted into the army as a second lieutenant of mounted artillery. Taken prisoner of war by the Soviets, he managed to escape and, after many adventures, returned to Warsaw, where he joined the Polish underground.*

In December 1939 he was sent, as one of the first couriers, to France, where he briefed the new Polish government-in-exile about the situation in occupied Poland. A few months later, following the same route through Hungary and Czechoslovakia, he returned to Poland bringing instructions and nominations for the leaders of the underground. A few weeks later, he was sent to France again, but this time his mission failed, and he was arrested by the Gestapo in Slovakia. He was tortured but did not betray any secrets.

Following an abortive suicide attempt in his prison cell, he was rescued in a daring action by a commando of the Polish underground. After his recovery he worked in the Cracow section of the Union of Armed Struggle, the military underground organization preceding the Home Army. Afterwards, he worked in Warsaw in the Bureau of Information and Propaganda.

In the autumn of 1942 "Witold" (his conspiracy pseudonym) was charged with a mission to London. I have talked with Professor Karski about this mission and particularly about the part connected with the Holocaust of Polish Jewry. (Ed. note: All non-English names are transliterated.) —M.K.

Maciej Kozlowski: Your mission was to carry a report to the Polish government in London and to the representatives of the political parties on the situation in occupied Poland. Part of this report was to be an account of the tragic situation of the Polish Jews. You were also charged with relaying the demands of the leaders of the Jewish underground to the Allied governments and the public opinion in the West. Who was the initiator of this part of the mission?

Jan Karski: The Jews. When the leaders of the two most important Jewish underground organizations, the Bund and the Zionist organization, learned that "Witold" was going to London, they asked the government delegate in Poland if they could use his services in the same way as the other underground political parties. The delegate, Cyryl Ratajski, called me and presented me with this proposition, adding, "I think, Witold, you should do it."

It was mid-September 1942. At this time I had completed the political preparations for the mission. I had instructions from the government delegate and the League of the Political Underground Parties, as well as opinions and

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views of some important political leaders. I was waiting for the technical preparations to be carried out by the liaison cell of the Home Army. I was to travel to Paris with the documents of one of the French workers who was employed by the Germans in Poland, and who was to go on a holiday to France in October. I was waiting for the documents.

M.K. How was the meeting with the Jewish leaders organized?

J.K. The meeting took place in the late afternoon, in one of the half-ruined buildings in the suburbs of Warsaw. Two people came and introduced themselves with pseudonyms, saying they represented the Bund and the Zionist organization. Later, after the war, I learned that the Bund representative was a pre-war lawyer, Leon Fajner. I still do not know who the Zionists' representative was. According to some sources, it was Jakov Berman, the representative of the left wing of the Bund, who was at that time living outside the Ghetto. Walter Laqueur, in his book *The Terrible Secret*, claims it was Menachem Kirschenbaum. In 1982, when I was in Israel to receive the Jad Vashem medal, in a Kibbutz made up of former inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto, I heard that this man's name was Guzik. I never had any further contact with those men.

Both men were in despair. They were fully aware that the deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto as well as from other ghettos in Poland would lead to the extermination of the Jewish people. They knew that the Jews were being transported to extermination camps (those were their exact words) although they did not know the details of the operation. They both stressed that unless dramatic, extraordinary measures were immediately put into effect, the entire Jewish people would perish. I remember the exact words of the Bund representative: "You Poles are also suffering; many of you will die. But after the war Poland will be restored, your wounds will slowly heal. But by then, the Polish Jews will no longer exist. Hitler will lose this war, but he will win the war he declared against the Polish Jews."

When the two learned that my mission covered meetings not only with the Polish authorities in London, but also with the highest circles of the Allied governments, they asked me to transmit a number of specific demands. First they summed up the situation in more or less this manner: The systematic extermination of the Jews in occupied Poland is not motivated by military needs connected with the war. Hitler plans the extermination of the Jews before the end of the war regardless of its outcome. The Polish Jews are helpless. They have no country of their own, nor representatives in the high Allied command. They cannot count on the Polish underground or Polish society as a whole. The Poles can save some individuals but they are unable to stop or even postpone the extermination. Therefore, the entire historical responsibility rests on the Allied governments, which must take extraordinary measures. They demanded that the governments do the following:

1. Announce publicly that prevention of the physical extermination of the Jews will be part of the overall Allied strategy.
2. Inform the German nation through radio, leaflets, and other means about the government's crimes against the Jews. All names of the German officials taking part in this action, as well as specific facts and methods used, should be publicly denounced.
3. Make formal public appeals to the German people to exert pressure on their government to stop the extermination.
4. Declare that if such pressure is not exerted and the extermination continues, the responsibility for the crimes will be placed on the German nation as a whole.
5. Make formal public announcements that if the extermination is not halted, the Allied governments will take unprecedented steps:
   a. Chosen targets in Germany will be bombed. The German people will be informed that the bombings are in retaliation for the Nazi crimes against the Jews.
   b. German prisoners of war who, having been informed about their government's crimes, still profess loyalty to the Nazi authorities, will be held responsible for those crimes.

The representatives of the Polish Jews in London, Szmul Zygielbojm and Dr. Ignace Szwarcbard, were to be charged to make every possible effort to bring these demands to the Allied governments. I also had a special mes-

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sage for the president of the Polish Republic, Wladyslaw Raczkiewicz. It was an appeal to Pope Pius XII to use every means, excommunication included, to stop the crimes against the Jews.

The next demand was to be presented to Prime Minister Wladyslaw Sikorski and the Interior Minister Stanislaw Mikolajczyk. The Jewish leaders wanted the Polish government to issue strict orders that Poles blackmailing, or informing on, Jews in hiding be sentenced to death by the Polish Underground. The identity of those punished and the nature of their crimes should be made public through the underground press. In order to avoid any risk of anti-Polish propaganda, I was forbidden to discuss this point with any non-Polish Jews.

I was also urged to appeal to governments, representatives of public opinion, and political leaders for technical and financial aid. Hard currency was needed to bribe the German officials. Some Jews would be able to leave Poland if blank, genuine foreign passports were provided. Provision had to be made that those Jews who succeeded in leaving Poland would be accepted abroad. Money, medicine, food, and clothing were needed for survivors in ghettos as well as for Christians hiding the Jews.

Finally, the two leaders told me about the preparations for the armed uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. The younger elements there were planning a "Jewish War" against the Third Reich. They had turned to the Home Army for weapons and been denied. The Jews were Polish citizens. They had a right to fight the common enemy, regardless of the outcome. They demanded that General Sikorski, commander-in-chief of the Polish armed forces, change the attitude of the command of the Home Army.

M.K. Did you agree to transmit all these demands?

J.K. Not fully. I was deeply moved by what I had heard, but I tried to explain that their demand that German POWs be punished in retaliation was unrealistic. No democratic government could do that. It would be against international law. The Allies could not use the methods the Nazis used. "I know English people," I explained, "they would not do that."

M.K. How did the Jewish leaders react?

J.K. They told me, "Try to understand us. We are desperate, we are dying. We are putting forward these demands to stop the extermination. We cannot judge what is and what is not realistic. You have to determine that."

M.K. What were your other reservations?

J.K. I refused to carry the message to General Sikorski. I told them, "I understand you and your situation, but I am a soldier in the Home Army. I cannot carry such a message behind the back of the Home Army Commander, who is my superior, unless you authorize me to see my commander in person. I will inform him of your complaints and ask for his comments." Both Jewish leaders heartily agreed. I started seeking contact with General Grot. It was not easy, as I was only a lieutenant. Because I was working in the Bureau of Information and Propaganda (BIP) I asked for a contact from Jerzy Makowiecki, my immediate superior. He sent me to his superior, Colonel Jan Rowecki. I did not tell them why I wanted to see General Grot, but only that it concerned my mission in London. After further efforts, I finally obtained permission to contact General Grot.

M.K. Did you talk alone with him?

J.K. No. Colonel Rowecki was present. At first General Grot praised my attitude, but then he said he was astonished that the Jewish leaders asked me to conduct such a mission behind his back. He knew them and was in touch with them. It was true that the Jews had asked him for weapons. He had given them something, but not much. He himself did not have enough weapons. He had to give arms to the units of diversion and sabotage, and the partisans fighting in the forests. Commanders of all the districts asked him for weapons. In most cases, he was unable to give them arms, but instead he issued money, because weapons could be bought from the Germans in the black market. He ordered his own subordinates to acquire weapons themselves. Moreover, as Commander of the Home Army, he had specified duties to fulfill. Apart from diversion, sabotage, and the current struggles, the most important task of the Home Army was to build reserves of human forces and weapons so that

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at a critical moment, difficult to foretell, they could plunge a knife into Germany's back. He was a military commander. All his actions had to make military sense. An uprising in the Ghetto did not make such sense. The Germans would deal with it, I remember his words well, "in a few hours."

M.K. We know today how wrong he was. The uprising in the Ghetto lasted for over three weeks and the Germans sustained heavy losses.

J.K. That is true. But at the time I understood his arguments as I did those of the Jews. At the end of our conversation, the general said that he was a well-disciplined soldier and if he received an order from London to transfer a specific number and kind of weapons to the Ghetto, he would carry out that order. But handing out weapons in the amount the Jews asked for was beyond his capability. The decision had to be made by the commander-in-chief.

M.K. You carried this message to General Sikorski. What was his reaction?

J.K. This message, like all the other messages, I repeated as accurately as possible, first to Szwarcbard and Zygielbojm and then to General Sikorski. But I am unable to say anything about the Polish Government's reaction because I simply do not know. I was only a courier. My duty was to transfer information. Nothing else. I could not ask the commander-in-chief what his opinion was about this or any other question. Any messages to relay to Poland would be given shortly before I left. Such was the practice. And as you know, I did not come back, although it had been planned that I would.

Witness for the Jews

M.K. Let us go back to Warsaw and to your talks with the Jewish leaders. They had an unusual proposition for you?

J.K. They wanted me to see with my own eyes at least part of what I had heard from them. They understood as well as I that in my future talks with the Western statesmen I would be much more convincing if my report were backed by eyewitness testimony. The extermination of the Jews was without precedent in the history of mankind. No one was prepared to grasp the atrociousness of what was going on. It is not true, as sometimes has been written, that I was the first one to present to the West the whole truth of the fate of the Jews in occupied Poland. There were others. The news was being transmitted through the underground radio, which was controlled by the Chief of Civil Struggle Stefan Korbonski. There were some Jews who managed to escape. The tragedy was that these testimonies were not believed. Not because of ill will, but simply because the facts were beyond human imagination.

I experienced this myself. When I was in the United States and told Justice Felix Frankfurter the story of the Polish Jews, he said, at the end of our conversation, "I cannot believe you." We were with the Polish ambassador to the U.S., Jan Ciechanowski. Hearing the justice's comments, he was indignant. "Lieutenant Karski is on an official mission. My government's authority stands behind him. You cannot say to his face that he is lying." Frankfurter's answer was, "I am not saying that he is lying. I only said that I cannot believe him, and there is a difference." I met with disbelief many times.

M.K. You saw the Warsaw Ghetto in its last days. You were also taken to the Belzec extermination camp. How were these undertakings conducted? Were they very dangerous?

J.K. Getting into the Ghetto was quite easy. At that time it was divided into four smaller zones. Streetcars ran between them. There were passages through basements, through sewer systems, and guards could be bribed. In the Ghetto there was no danger. The trip to Belzec was much riskier.

M.K. Did your superiors agree to that risk? Apart from the Jewish problem, you had an important mission to carry out. You were a soldier, under orders.

J.K. You do not understand my role in that damned war. I was a nobody. In all four of my missions, I acted as a mailbox or a gramophone record, hurried from one side of the front to the other. Everybody had me swear that I would tell what I heard to authorized persons only. I knew that if something happened to me the Jews would take responsibility and inform the

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government's delegate. I didn't even think about asking anybody. Besides, whom was I to ask? Colonel Rowecki? The Alliance of Political Parties? Any one of them or all together? Also, at that time, in the autumn of 1942, my personal situation was not very clear. I was working for BIP and it was not clear if my superiors were military or civil authorities. I carried my mission for the civil authorities only. The Home Army was responsible for the technical matters, but I was a political courier, not a military one. General Grot made that very clear during our conversation. Therefore, I had to make the decision myself. Actually, the Jews were making it.

M.K. How was the Warsaw Ghetto when you saw it?

J.K. I was in the Ghetto twice. The Bund representative accompanied me. I saw terrible things. Not only did I witness starvation and misery, I witnessed a "hunt." I saw boys from the Hitler *Jugend* shooting into a crowd of running people. I have remembered these scenes all my life.

M.K. How did you get into the Belzec camp?

J.K. A guide contacted me. He appeared to be a Jew, but of course I cannot say for sure. We did not introduce ourselves and we did not talk. We went together to Lublin, changed trains, and arrived in Belzec. It was the middle of October. The guide took me to a hardware shop. Several hours later a man arrived. He spoke perfect Polish and was very matter-of-fact. He had an Estonian guard's uniform for me. I knew that the Germans never used Poles in the death camps. The extermination was to be kept secret. The man gave me precise instructions: "You will follow me. You must not speak to anyone. You speak neither Polish nor German. I will take you into the camp, but once inside you will be on your own. As far as I know, you want to see the camp. After a while, I will give you a sign, and we will leave together."

We entered the camp without any trouble. My guide was well known there, and after showing some documents, we were allowed in. The camp was enclosed, partly with barbed wire, partly by the wall. On the right side I saw a railway sidetrack. I was standing close to the main gate through which the Jews were being taken out. For many years I could not understand it. I thought that Belzec was a transitory camp. It was after the war that I learned that it was a death camp. During the trials of the German war criminals in the late 1940s, some Polish railwaymen who cooperated with the underground were cross-examined as witnesses. They explained the scene I saw.

By German standards, Belzec was run very inefficiently. In fact at that time its commander, SS Captain Gottlieb Hering, was on trial before an SS court. The extermination in Belzec was done by exhaust gases from engines salvaged from Soviet tanks. It was a very ineffective way of killing. The engines overheated, and the whole process of killing lasted for a long time. Sometimes one transport had not been completed by the time a new one arrived. In such cases the new transport was directed to Sobibor, where the death machine was running much better. I witnessed such a scene. The Jews were being transported from Belzec to Sobibor. I could not see the gas chambers; they were, as I learned later, deeper inside the camp, on the other side of the mass of people being directed into the cars.

I would like now to mention some events that were taking place at the same time but were fully revealed only after the war. In August 1942 a certain German officer, Kurt Gerstein, arrived in Belzec. He was to put things in order, that is, to instruct the inefficient commander in the virtues of Cyklon B gas compared with exhaust gas. He fulfilled his duty, but he must have had some conscience still alive within him. Returning, he met a Swedish diplomat on the train and told him the whole story. He told about the exhaust gases, the collapsing tank engines, the whole story about the extermination of Jews in the Belzec camp. The Swede made a report and sent it to Stockholm. But the Swedish authorities, in an effort not to antagonize the still powerful Germans, kept this report secret. An entire year passed before the report reached London. It didn't mention Gerstein, of course. The Polish government learned about the report and made an uproar. But by now it was 1944. The "Jewish Question" in occupied Poland was solved. After the war Gerstein was caught by the French.

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He made a detailed report, and committed suicide.

M.K. That means that the information you transmitted to the West was not complete, but even so it was horrible enough that people could not believe you?

J.K. I saw terrible things in Belzec. I wrote about them in my book, *Story of a Secret State*, which was published in 1944. I broke down right there. My guide noticed that I was not behaving normally and he shouted over the Jewish crowd, "Folge mir, folge mir!" We both left by the same route. I spent less than an hour in the camp. I was sick, vomiting blood. I saw terrible things. Unbelievable. You would not believe what I saw either! Even today, although over forty years have passed, I cannot forget the scenes I witnessed there.

M.K. You left Warsaw with the documents of a French worker. Your itinerary took you through Germany to Paris, through the Pyrenees to neutral Spain, and from the port of Algeciras you took a boat to a waiting British ship, which in turn took you to Gibraltar. You arrived in London in the middle of November.

J.K. I remember that date because my trip broke a record: twenty-one days from Warsaw to London. No other courier made this trip in such a short time. When I was in Paris, I delivered some reports, among them the report about the situation of the Jews, to the commander of the Polish underground in France, Aleksander Kawalkowski. He sent them to London. The Jewish report, made by three men from BIP—Henryk Wolinski, Ludwik Widerszal, and Stanislaw Herbst—was over forty written pages, put on microfilm, hidden in a specially designed key.

When I arrived in London, I stayed with Pawel Siudak, an associate of Stanislaw Kot and Stanislaw Mikolajczyk in their contacts with occupied Poland, and kept under cover. I was to come back with another mission.

On the first day after my arrival I met General Sikorski. I did not make a detailed report because the general told me that he was leaving. Later I learned that he was going to Washington to meet President Roosevelt. The general told me only that I would receive the highest Polish Order of Merit, the Virtuti Militari Cross. For a month after this conversation I was allowed to see only a small group of Poles. It was after Sikorski's return that I was able to see some Britons. I had a chance to speak with four members of the highest authority, the War Cabinet. I saw Minister for Foreign Affairs Sir Anthony Eden, the Conservative leader Lord Cranborne, Arthur Greenwood from the Labour party, and the Chairman of the Board of Trade Hugh Dalton. I also spoke several times with Lord Selbourne, who was responsible in the British government for the contacts with underground movements in occupied countries. I also saw the British and American ambassadors to the Polish government, the influential member of parliament Ellen Wilkinson, and many other people.

For every meeting I prepared scrupulously. I knew that I had to be brief because at any given moment the person I was talking with could close the meeting. Usually I prepared a twenty-minute briefing. Four or five minutes of the briefing were devoted to the fate of the Jews.

M.K. What were the reactions to this part of your report?

J.K. They varied. Eden, for instance, stopped me short saying, "We already received Karski's report. Matters will take their due course." At the time, I did not understand this statement. After the war, I learned from Martin Gilbert's book, *Auschwitz and the Allies*, that a detailed report had been prepared, based on my revelations to Professor Kot as well as on microfilms that had been sent from Paris. Professor Kot, by the way, was deeply concerned about the fate of the Jews. This report was presented to A. L. Aestermann, a liaison man between the Jewish Congress and the British Foreign Office. According to Gilbert, who used British archives opened thirty years after the war, this report was handed to Under Secretary of State Richard Law on the 26th of November. When I spoke with Eden in mid-February, he may have already read the report, and perhaps that was the reason why, among many questions, he asked none concerning the Jewish question. Lord Selbourne was more interested in the fate of the Jews, but he told me very frankly that the demands made by the

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Jewish leaders could not be met. According to him, the main task of the Allies was winning the war, and therefore anything not strictly of a military character was regarded as a side issue.

M.K. Szmul Zygielbojm met with the same attitude and therefore he committed suicide a few months later to protest against it.

J.K. Zygielbojm was a tragic figure. His suicide, which was to have been a dramatic cry of protest, did not affect the fate of Polish Jews in any way.

M.K. Let us come back to your mission. Apart from talks with officials, you were asked by Jewish leaders from Poland to influence public opinion. How did you fulfill this part of your task?

J.K. I attempted to reach the most influential people in cultural and artistic milieus. I met Arthur Koestler, who tried to do whatever he could. Acting on Lord Selbourne's suggestion, he wrote and read several speeches for BBC radio, speaking as Karski. My voice would not be recognized, and Lord Selbourne said that Koestler spoke with the same bad accent as I, so he could act a courier from Poland.

I also broadcast from the "Swit" station. It was a station that broadcast from Britain but passed as broadcasting from occupied Poland.

My meeting with H. G. Wells, whom I met through the Polish writer and poet Antoni Slonimski, was very different. The only comment Wells made after my briefing was, "I wonder why in every country where there are Jews, there is anti-Semitism. Some research should be done about this problem."

I had many meetings with journalists, and before my trip to the United States I collaborated with Thomas Mann and Aleksy Tolstoy on a booklet of Nazi crimes against the Jews. Thousands of copies were published. Its title was *Fate of the Jews*.

M.K. When did your trip to the United States take place?

J.K. In the summer of 1943. I went with a false diplomatic passport as Jan Karski because I was still supposed to go back to Poland. That was the origin of my present name, because later, when I applied for U.S. citizenship, these false papers were the only ones I had. When I explained the story to the U.S. officials, they said that Karski was easier to pronounce than Kozielewski, and so I became Karski. My mission in the United States had the same purpose as in London. I was to meet government officials, representatives of public opinion, and church dignitaries.

M.K. And as in London, you met with disbelief?

J.K. I already told you about my meeting with Justice Frankfurter. I also met President Roosevelt. It was a great experience for me. You must understand that people such as Roosevelt or Churchill, men who held the fate of the world in their hands, appeared like gods to a young soldier like me. It is understandable that I was intimidated. Roosevelt was very friendly. He asked many questions concerning the political situation in Poland. Knowing that I was supposed to return to Poland, he tried to convince me that the Polish eastern border had to be changed and that Poland would obtain compensation in the West. Altogether the conversation lasted for twenty minutes. As I mentioned above, I was under the spell of the president. He radiated power and dignity.

Today I see this conversation in a different light. Apart from polite generalities, he said nothing important, either on Polish or on Jewish questions. He said only that Poland had a friend in the White House and that the Nazi criminals would be punished after the war.

M.K. So the American part of the mission was completely fruitless?

J.K. Not completely. A few years ago I read an account of John Pehl's press conference. He was the first director of the American Refugee Board, an institution set up to take care of the refugees from occupied Europe, mostly Jews. During that conference Pehl said, "Karski's mission really shocked the president. He changed his attitude and the attitude of the State Department. Roosevelt at once asked for the creation of the American Refugee Board. We started our work in February 1944. But it was too late, then."

M.K. What was the attitude of the Americans you met to the other dramatic demands of the Polish Jews?

J.K. Once again, I cannot say. Wherever I could, I presented these demands. Some peo-

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ple, like Rabbi Stephen Wise, the leader of the American Jews, were interested in some details. For instance, he asked me about the blank passports. But as in London, I was not informed about the results of my mission.

M.K. At the end of 1943 you were supposed to go back to Poland. Why did you not return?

J.K. When I got back to London I learned that the Germans knew about my trip to the United States. German radio broadcasts claimed that a certain Karski, a Bolshevik agent paid by American Jews, was slandering the Third Reich, presenting false, fabricated stories. Because of these Mikolajczyk decided that my return to Poland would be too risky. I was marked by the scars on my wrists. To tell the truth, the Polish government did not know what to do with me. I knew too many secrets. Finally, I found myself in the United States as a member of the Polish Embassy staff.

Assessing the Mission

M.K. As far as I know, you did not return to your war adventures until you agreed to be interviewed by Claude Lanzmann for his film *Shoah*. But the entire interview was not shown on the film. You did not say anything about the results of your mission. What can you say now, forty years later, about the results of the "Karski Mission"?

J.K. As to the Jewish part of my mission, it was an obvious failure. Six million Jews died and no one offered them effective help. Not any nation, not any government, not any church. The help they did receive, heroic help, was provided only by individuals.

M.K. After the war, when the full extent of Nazi crimes became well known, there were many voices expressing surprise. Facts that had been revealed were generally regarded as sensational fabrications. But these facts should have been known. They were described in your book. You presented them personally. How can we understand that?

J.K. Hypocrisy. Everybody who wanted to know about German crimes against the Jews could have known and not only through me. There were many other sources. But this truth could not get through. This was not only because of ill will. The Holocaust, the systematic extermination of an entire nation, happened for the first time in the history of mankind. People were not prepared for such truth. And that is why these truths were rejected, even subconsciously. The most trustworthy witnesses were rejected. There are things which minds and hearts refuse to accept.

M.K. After the war, after publishing your book, you disappeared from the public scene. Many people thought you had died. You came back to this part of your life in Lanzmann's film. Why did you decide to speak up after so many years?

J.K. I was persuaded by Claude Lanzmann. He is a difficult man, very emotional and obsessed with his film. He spent eleven years making it. At first I refused. But Lanzmann persuaded me. He told me that it was my duty to speak. And finally, I consented.

M.K. Did you regret it after seeing the film? *Shoah* aroused much controversy. Lanzmann was criticized for presenting a biased view and for distorting historical truth by the selective way he chose those he interviewed.

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J.K. I do not agree with such opinions. Lanzmann made a great film. But a large part of the Polish press, both in Poland and abroad, did not understand his intentions. It is a film about the Holocaust. About it only and nothing else. Even the war is merely mentioned in it. There are no political issues. Lanzmann told me he was interested in interviewing three categories of people: the Jews who lived through the Holocaust, those who were instigators, and the witnesses. Most of those who saw the Holocaust were Poles. And they were not intellectuals, city dwellers, and educated persons, but peasants and people from small cities who lived close to the death camps. And it is not Lanzmann's fault that they are presented the way they are. He does not speak Polish. He did not instruct them how and what to say.

M.K. But among witnesses there were also decent people, without resentment against Jews. There was a special cell in the Home Army "Zegota" concerned only with helping the persecuted Jews. There were hundreds of Poles who helped Jews at the risk of their own lives. They could help only individuals, there was no other choice.

J.K. You don't want to understand either. Lanzmann made a film about the mechanism of the Holocaust. Not about the Poles'—or any other nation's—attitude towards the Jews, not about the attempts to help. Therefore, he took only a part from my interview, which lasted for many hours. My testimony from the Ghetto and Belzec. He was not interested in what Karski or anyone else did to help the Jews. I regret that my interview was shortened, but I have no grounds for complaint. The second part of the interview, from the point of view of the filmmaker, was not to the point.

The film is a masterpiece. It was a sensation not only in the United States, but in the whole world. Even among Poles, after their first hysterical reactions, after trumped-up charges and exaggerated figures concerning help given to Jews during the war, some sobriety was evident, especially among those who had seen the entire film. It was evident in the press, both in Poland and abroad.

This film will shape the consciousness of millions of people. It will teach the results of intolerance, anti-Semitism, racism, and hatred. The Pope underlined this, praising the film and its director. But critics of the film preferred to ignore the Pope's remarks.

One may regret, as I do, that Lanzmann did not mention in his film the problems involved in helping the Jews in Poland, France, Hungary, Holland, Denmark, or Bulgaria. Therefore, I see the necessity of making another film, one as great and powerful as *Shoah*, a film that would also shape the consciousness of mankind. So let the churches, governments, international organizations, and people of talent and good heart, find a way to cooperate in the production of such a film. Let this new film show the endeavors of millions of Europeans who risked their lives or freedom to save the Jews.

Such a film becomes important because *Shoah* is so powerful. Above all, it is truly necessary that those generations that did not live through the Holocaust, that did not witness it, Jew and Gentile alike, not lose their faith in mankind. After all, it is not true that the Jews were totally abandoned. Over half a million Jews survived the Holocaust in Europe. Someone helped them: nuns and peasants, workers and underground organizations. This film, which has yet to be made, should show what love for one's neighbor means, how powerful a force it can be. Because, I repeat, the Jews were not totally abandoned. They were abandoned by governments, social structures, church hierarchies, but not by ordinary men and women. The organized structures fell short of expectation, but not ordinary people. And there were millions of such people. In this is hidden a sense of optimism, and this optimism should be passed on to those generations for whom the Holocaust is only a page from a history textbook. □

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Istvan Rev

The Advantages of Being Atomized

How Hungarian Peasants Coped With Collectivization

In that part of the world where political legitimacy is derived from the universal law of continuous technical development, industrialization, concentration, and centralization, the strength of dispersed small-scale agricultural production and the relative well-being of the peasantry are not self-evident. In a country where for decades an artificially high disparity has existed between agricultural and industrial terms of trade, and where this has functioned not only as a means of exploiting agriculture to help industrial development, but also of helping statisticians by using extremely low agricultural prices to prove industry's high contribution to the gross national product—in such a country the high contribution of agriculture to the well-being of the population is not part of the natural course of events.

In 1952, the average Hungarian peasant's income was 50 percent that of the urban industrial worker's; in the very same year, after fulfilling obligatory deliveries a peasant family was left with 80 kilograms of grain to feed itself and to seed the following year. It was less than one-third of the amount a typical French peasant family had in an average year in the eighteenth century! In that same year, according to the official statistics, 800,000 peasant families ought to have died of hunger. They survived, however, and were able to spend 3.5 billion working hours on their small plots in 1981.

A WESTERN TOURIST TRAVELING through certain parts of the Hungarian countryside will see huge adjoining fields on one side of the road and narrow strips of land on the other. The naive tourist, being informed about the existence of the second economy, will happily recognize in the narrow strips proof of the vitality of household production. But in this case she or he will be seriously mistaken. The narrow strips belong to the collective farm and are tilled on a share-cropping basis—the peasants are entitled to one-third of the produce of these plots—while the larger fields on the other side of the road are the small private holdings, cultivated on a spontaneous collective basis. Concentration is hidden behind the narrow strips; the adjoining fields hide small-scale family production. The large is the small, the small is the large; concentration may mean dispersion, divided plots cooperation. Or is it the other way around? What is appearance and what is reality? The landscape cautions the tourist: this is a part of the world where real processes move beneath the surface.

Social scientists are usually not so cautious; they have instant explanations for the refreshing sight: the paradoxical division of the fields is natural, a result of the death of charisma, of inevitable routinization, normalization, and consolidation in the era of détente. It is the combined effect of internal and external factors: the positive demonstration effect of the West coming through ideological, technical, and trade channels, the rebirth of the petty-bourgeois consumer mentality that strengthens the reforming, technocratic faction inside the ruling elite, the new class of the intellectuals. It comes from the necessity of economic efficiency, which we see as the infallible mark of the fruitful convergence between market and planned economy. This is the superficial view from the top, the vision of the backdoor Kremlinologists: history is made behind the closed doors of party headquarters, in economic research institutes, at trade negotiations with Western bankers on Wall Street, in Rockefeller Center, in the City of London, in Geneva.

I have another explanation, another story to

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tell. History is made sometimes in the peasant cottages, in the fields, in the villages under the cover of night; history is made even in the internment camps and prisons by those who have seemingly no authorization, no power to make history—by those who are atomized.

Post-War Land Reform

IN 1945 THE COMMUNIST PARTY, learning from the failures of the first Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919 when the party organized collective farms and lost the peasants' support, agreed to parcel out the large agricultural holdings. After the 1945 land reform Hungary became a country of dwarf holdings and small peasants. The average-size holding was about ten acres. At the time of land reform an obligatory agricultural delivery system was in effect that had been introduced during World War II and was justified following the war by the unprecedented shortages, especially in the cities.

With the consolidation of the new political system and later of one-party rule, financial institutions, industry, and commerce were gradually socialized. The contrast and tension between the growing sphere of state property and privately owned small-scale agriculture steadily increased. When planning was introduced in the state-owned sector of the economy, maintaining the delivery system in agriculture seemed an appropriate substitute for planning in the private sector. Delivery meant not only a heavy and progressive tax in kind; the state also exercised its right to determine what, when, how, and in what quantity the peasants should produce. The delivery system, through direct and total state intervention, served to establish disguised state-ownership while formally maintaining private and cooperative property.

THE CREATION OF A MORE OR LESS UNIFORM landholding system with hundreds of thousands of small farms—all about the same size—helped to establish a uniform delivery structure in which all the farms had the same kinds of obligation. The delivery system forced each peasant to produce the same variety of produce as all the other peasants, to produce everything, in fact, that the household and the country needed. (Had the farms been specialized it would have been impossible to keep records of all the different social and economic categories of the farmers.) Such forced autarky mirrored the autarky of the national economy—and of the Soviet economy (based on its vast resources) between the two world wars.

Thus, after 1948 a typical small farm with about ten acres of land had to produce and deliver grain, rye, barley or oats, maize, sunflower seed, hay, potatoes, beans, peas or lentils, poultry, eggs, milk, butter, wine, pigs, fat, and cows. It was in the planners' and the centralizers' interest to transform small individual farms into complete national agro-economies on a micro scale, to force everybody to produce everything.

But this forced autarky (or pseudo-autarky, since the producers were required to produce a certain amount of surplus above the needs of the family) decreased the peasants' dependency on their surroundings. Already during the Great Depression withdrawal behind the walls of autarky was a typical self-defense mechanism of the Central European peasantry. In this way they were able to shut out the hostile external political and economic world. A specialized entrepreneur is always more dependent on the market, on the forces of the economy over which he has no considerable influence, than the autarkic or pseudo-autarkic small farmer. It was in the planners' interest to transform the small individual farms into Lilliputian agro-economies, to make all peasants completely dependent on a single political and economic center. But forced autarky increased the independence of the peasantry; the same delivery system that established disguised state-ownership in agriculture "liberated" the peasants from the uncontrollable forces of the market.

The ideal type of planned economy is a system without spontaneity, unforeseen factors, or unintended consequences, in which everything works according to a single central will. The ideal-typical planned economy is Stalin's monstrous clockwork where the individual cog-wheels neatly fit into each other, serving without question the grandiose work of the machinery.

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Socialist society in its East European version is by definition anti-individualistic. The rationale behind its establishment is to solve the antagonism between production on a social scale and individual expropriation. Planning is considered the appropriate means by which to put an end to the individualistic anarchy of the market, to create social harmony by substituting the social for the individual, the intentional design for the working of the invisible hand. To carry out the intentional design of the centralizer undisturbed, to accomplish the grand social vision of the planner, all individual actions must be under strict central control to ensure that the billions of individual acts contribute to the gigantic task of social construction. In this sense it is a paradox that the anti-individualist centralizer's mind is constantly occupied by the problems of the individual. The planner must locate the economic tasks of each producer, the centralizer must find the most appropriate place for each citizen in the political machinery. The construction of the anti-individualistic, collectivist, centralized society starts with unprecedented individualization.

When the Planning Office works out the national plans, it divides them among the different ministries, directorates, and counties, which further divide them among the firms, boroughs, and villages, which in turn divide them among workers on the shop floor, among individual peasants. The basic unit of the plan is the individual producer, more so in agriculture since individual quotas are determined with regard to the economic, social, and political status of the individual peasant. The quota of each village is a certain percent of the gross obligation of the borough (depending on the amount of land and the number of people in the village) and the individual quota is a certain percent of the gross village obligation. But the individual quotas are determined not only according to the gross obligation of the whole village, but according to the individual's specific status as well, regardless of the village obligation. Individual quotas differ according to the quality of land, the size of the holding, the type of the holding, the social category of the peasant before World War II, his or her political activities during the old regimes, and his or her suspected political sympathies. There were five hundred different ways of calculating the quota of a single acre, but in the end these quotas somehow had to equal the gross obligation of the village, the obligations of the villages had to equal the quotas of the boroughs, and at the very top the particular obligations had to equal the overall plan of the Planning Office. (Since the guidelines for dividing the plan and summing it up were totally different, it would have been a real surprise if the initial figures and the end results, or the figures at the different levels of the hierarchy, had turned out to be the same.)

In order to work out reliable plans—or to be more precise, to work out plans as ambitious as possible—the authorities had to control all the resources and inputs, i.e., all the information relevant to the production process. And since the basic unit of central planning was the individual, the authorities needed access to detailed information concerning each producer. At that point the apparatus became hopelessly dependent on the individual. The producers possessed the monopoly of information; the centralizer had to rely on the information provided by individuals. And so began the unrestricted warfare for information.

In 1952 the various ministries had to report monthly an average of 214,000 different economic indicators to the Planning Office. The Central Statistical Bureau required an additional 55,000 figures. To produce this data, the ministries collected millions of pieces of information from the counties, the counties from the boroughs, the boroughs from the villages, the village officers from individuals. While in 1943 there were five administrative employees per hundred physical workers, in 1955 there were thirty-five. And although everybody was busy producing data, it was in everybody's best interest to report as distorted information as possible.

The daily reports of constant growth confirmed the system's superiority over all preceding social and economic formations. Growth—yearly, monthly, daily—kept the centralized system alive, and the prospect of still more spectacular growth legitimized its methods, forced the planners and centralizers to find still

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more effective means of control. The planner became a prisoner of his vision, since he had to report more spectacular results than those of the previous day. Only the results could legitimize his existence. But since today's results became the basis of tomorrow's more ambitious plans, everybody responsible for the production tried to hide the real output, or produce less than would have been possible. There was a constant fight going on between the planners and the producers, between the higher and the lower levels of the hierarchy. The ministries wanted more from the directorates than what they were willing to produce, the directorates demanded far more from the firms than what they reported themselves able to produce, the villages were under pressure from the boroughs, the peasants from the village authorities.

But it is not easy to hide the output, or the potential output, if one does not hide or falsify the available inputs as well. The most important inputs in a technically underdeveloped agriculture, in which deliveries are levied on an individual basis, are land and people.

In 1954 a survey carried out by the Ministry of Supervision revealed that more than 1,300,000 acres of land were left out of the delivery system. This lost territory, which was impossible to find, equaled the entire arable land of one of the largest counties of the country. At all levels of the hierarchy some land was lost. Land was lost when cooperatives were formed or disintegrated, when kulaks were deported from the villages, during the formation of adjoining fields for the collective farms (when the remaining private landowners got new parcels outside the village), when an owner divided land among family members in order to escape the progressive tax system, when the village reported afforestation (and when some years later the investigating committee was unable to find a single tree in the vicinity), when the peasants just left the land and fled to the cities, or when owners were unable to recognize their own land when questioned by officers from the Ministry of Supervision.

There was a cooperative, for example, mentioned in my documents as the infamous "Moonlight" cooperative, where members worked on the fields only during the night in order to keep the exact amount of their land secret. In a country where in eight years, between 1945 and 1953, nineteen million acres, or the equivalent of the entire arable land of the country, changed hands one or more times, it is no wonder that a considerable amount of land could be lost.

It was in the interest not only of the producers to hide the land, but of the authorities as well. Less land meant lower obligations, and when land that had reportedly been missing was secretly taxed without the knowledge of the higher levels of the hierarchy, the local apparatus was able to overfulfill the original plan, or at least find some compensation for failures at the end of the year. So the apparatus was dependent on the producers not only for obtaining information. What was more important, those in power were desperately in need of the producers' falsifications. Perhaps it sounds surprising, but it was in the apparatus's best interest to get distorted information, to be cheated.

At the beginning of each year everybody in the different offices, even the chairman of the Planning Office, knew perfectly well that it was impossible to fulfill the plan. The officers at the lower levels of the hierarchy knew that the information on which the plan was based was completely distorted, since it was they who produced this information. (The Planning Office knew that the plans were based on so-called progressive planned figures and that the planned harvest yields became higher every year while the actual harvest results were constantly decreasing.) From the very beginning everybody was sure that there would be an inevitable failure at the end of the year, and as a consequence the Ministry of Supervision would start an investigation to find those who were responsible for the catastrophe. And since in the theory of the period the concept of a collective legal person hardly existed, responsibility could be nothing but individual. The producers had not much to lose except their freedom, but the members of the apparatus could lose their positions with all the accompa-

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nying privileges. And an ex-official without any privileges was worse than dead in Eastern Europe during the 1950s. But there was no way to avoid the catastrophe except by finding plausible alibis. It was not necessary that the alibis be true; everybody knew that these were fake figures, cooked justifications. He who was able to produce the best story won—at least until the next judgment day.

Those who had less fertile imaginations or did not cooperate with the peasants were disqualified. One village officer who was called to account for the loss of ten tons of corn said that the corn that was stored in a barn was perhaps eaten by the chickens. It was not a good story; he was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. The director of a state-owned farm reported in 1953 that an enormous loss of grain was due to the installation of new vacuum equipment that had dried the grain too much; the story was not bought, so he too went to prison. In 1952, when the minister of deliveries appeared with a strong police force in a small mountain village to force the peasants to give over the levied deliveries, and the peasants told him that they had been persuaded and were just on their way to enter the cooperative, the minister, who knew the advantages of cooperation perfectly well, said: "It was only a trick. I cannot imagine anybody willing to enter a cooperative." In 1953 the deputy minister of deliveries referred to the fact that last year "the weight loss of maize and sunflower seed increased due to the higher than average water content of the harvested produce." Perhaps he thought that the future does not belong to the fainthearted, but to those who have the courage to say what is most unbelievable: for 1952 was the most drought-stricken year in two decades.

THOSE WHO REALLY COOPERATED with the peasantry had the best chances. They allowed the peasants to sell their cows on the black market and reported the sudden loss of animals in the village; helped the peasants falsify their birth certificates so that the population suddenly grew old, and those above 65 years of age became eligible for quota reductions; shut their eyes when the peasants organized pseudocooperatives; tolerated the division of land on paper among family members; contributed to hiding animals in the woods or grain under the ground. While conventional political reasoning sees a basic antagonism between those in power and the powerless producers, my sources show a strong interdependency. For the members of the apparatus to survive, the survival strategies of the producers were indispensable.

The "Campaign" Economy

WHEN THE FIRST WAVE of collectivization started in 1948 it became the main task of the apparatus to organize cooperatives. The central and local apparatuses worked day and night persuading the peasants by propaganda, administrative measures, and sheer force to enter cooperatives. If they succeeded in fulfilling this politically important plan, they were then unable to meet the delivery obligations of the village. Cooperatives—unlike villages or boroughs—got quota reductions (that was all they got as an economic incentive), so more cooperatives meant more reductions without a change in the original overall plan of the village. When dekulakization became the Number One priority, the kulaks were imprisoned, sent to internment camps, and their land confiscated, which decreased the taxable production further. When the construction of new "socialist cities" began, it became the obligation of the villages to send workers to construction.

It was not only the inherent need of mobilization that gave birth to the subsequent "campaign," but the constant reproduction of bottlenecks, the combined result of centralization and resistance to centralization. In a centralized economy there are always bottlenecks, and where there are bottlenecks there are priorities, and where there are priorities there are campaigns. Whenever there is a shortage of meat, the meat front is opened and meat becomes the main priority. If the apparatus succeeds in slaughtering the available cows, the result will be a shortage of milk. If the priority is poultry, the next campaign will focus on eggs. The result of the grain campaign is a critical shortage of fodder, the shortage of fodder will lead to the slaughtering of the

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animals, and the meat shortage comes next year. The apparatus has to act like the sailor who tries to stop hundreds of leaks with a single sand sack.*

The loyalty of the apparatus is judged according to its success at the ongoing campaign. But if the apparatus is too successful, then it is made responsible for the next inevitable catastrophe; it is "deviation" that has to be blamed. Revolutions eat up their children and there are numerous theories to explain this strange habit. In my view, campaigns give birth to the "dizzy-with-success effect": the party cannot blame itself or the system it has created; it is always a fraction of the apparatus contaminated with left or right deviation that goes too far, endangering the cause of the revolution. Campaigns push the apparatus into extremes, and when the inevitable next catastrophe appears on the horizon, those who prove their loyalty, who take the campaign seriously, are labeled as deviants, members of a faction. But those who have memories of earlier crises, who know that this campaign will lead only to the next one, and so try to sabotage the momentary priority, end up as members of a faction as well. Those who go too far in organizing cooperatives, slaughtering pigs, imprisoning kulaks, collecting acorns in the woods, find themselves in the left opposition. And those who try to save the poultry for the sake of the egg, the cows for the milk, the peasants to feed the cities, end up at the next trial of the right opposition.

It was always an impossible task to maneuver between the Scylla and Charybdis of the left and right oppositions.

> By the spring of 1794 . . . the first round of requisitions had been fully discharged and Paris had some reserves with which to look ahead. It was an excellent time to make some concession to the hard-pressed authorities of the grain districts . . . on which the weight of Parisian needs had fallen most heavily. . . . It was a clever, if unscrupulous, move on the part of the Revolutionary Government to place among the accused at the Hébertistes trial a Parisian food commissioner, Antoine Descombes, who had made his weight felt in the interests of Parisian needs. . . . Paris might be indestructible, its food commissioners were not. Descombes was guillotined.[2]

In a crisis situation there are two typical reactions: the campaign syndrome, which leads to immediate action, and the inertia of the local apparatus, which is fed by a déjà-vu feeling. During the 1927 grain crisis in the Soviet Union it was very difficult to push the local apparatus, which remembered the 1925 grain crisis and the way it was solved by the central authorities. According to Moshe Lewin, "[m]emories of this earlier crisis may explain the lack of vigilance on the part of the local authorities."[3] They were waiting for central measures, knowing that a local campaign would make them vulnerable. The local authorities try to wait as long as possible, but since simple inactivity looks like sabotage, they overdramatize the situation. By overdramatizing they are able to show that they really care and that the situation is just too, too complicated to handle on a local level. But this theatrical trick is a double-edged sword: the central authorities become alert, put more pressure on the local apparatus, demand more serious action, send investigators to the spot, who are not paid to leave with empty hands. They will find that the crisis is a result of negligence, of a conspiracy between the officials and the kulaks, sabotage, political deviance. And a new campaign will start which will last until the next crisis, until the next campaign.

Instead of using the term "planned" economy, it would be more precise to call this

*Although the sack stands here as a metaphor, sometimes the sack becomes very real. During World War I there was a grain delivery system in Russia. "The collection of sacking for the 1916-1917 campaign was made still more difficult, apart from transport problems, by the increasing financial stringency. By the first of May it had been possible to import from abroad only 60 million sacks, which, with the domestic production, furnished but one-half of all requirements. Special attention was, therefore, paid to the preservation of sacking for repeated use. By an agreement with the War Department, the armies at the front were ordered to be very careful of sacks and send them back to the rear, and the soldiers were to receive bonuses at the rate of 10 to 20 kopecks for every sack returned in fair condition."[1] Perhaps the Russian government was able to eliminate the sack shortage this way, but the likely consequence was a shortage of soldiers next year in the trenches.

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system a "campaign" economy. If there is any plan at all, it quickly becomes invalid. There were branches of the economy that got their plans only during the second half of the year or not at all. It was a usual practice to rewrite the plans at the end of the year to make them more consistent with reality. In 1952 the Five-Year Plan was rewritten 472 times, the yearly plan 113 times. If one single item was changed it had an infinite snowball effect. If the figures for leather glove production were altered, the figures for leather inputs had to be changed. And this changed the plans for calf-breeding, meat production, the seed for fodder. And since more land was needed for fodder, the land for other agricultural produce was reduced, let's say for hops, and this had a serious effect on the beer-brewing industry. So the government had to import more beer from Czechoslovakia, and in return to export more of something else, which changed the plans for that particular industry and the agricultural inputs it needed, and so on and so forth.

It was believed that the most important advantage of planning over the market was that, while the latter regulated production and consumption *ex post*, the former regulated the economic processes *ex ante*. But life took priority over the intentional design, the campaign over the plan, and it was only constant fear *ex ante* that regulated the working of the system.

A Politics of Resistance

What is individualization of the producers in the sphere of the economy is atomization of the citizens in the arena of politics. One can argue that the liquidation of all parties, associations, unions, organizations, and clubs, which are then replaced by one single centralized, formal, over-ritualized organization—one ruling party, one centralized trade union, one youth organization, one women's association—is the end of politics.

Hannah Arendt, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, argued that

> totalitarian movements depended less on the structurelessness of a mass society than on the specific conditions of an atomized and individualized mass.... [T]error can rule absolutely only over men who are isolated against each other and ... therefore, one of the primary concerns of all tyrannical government is to bring this isolation about. Isolation may be the beginning of terror; it certainly is its most fertile ground; it always is the result.[4]

And in *The Crisis of the Republic* she goes on to say: "[T]he effectiveness of terror depends almost entirely on the degree of social atomization. Every kind of organized opposition must disappear before the full force of terror can be let loose."[5]

Atomization is thus seen as the termination of political discourse and political action, the death of politics. But is has seldom been noticed that when all possibility of meaningful action has been eliminated, when there is no formal framework of political expression left, then *everything* becomes a potential political issue. Instead of having been liquidated, politics becomes dispersed, hidden but present everywhere. If there is no formal, confinable arena for political discourse, if there is no open political talk, then all talk can acquire a political meaning. If people cannot act, cannot speak openly, then all private acts and all private talk can be suspected of having a secret political connotation. Although political scientists usually think that demobilization, individualization, and atomization signal the end of politics, in my view, when the full force of terror is let loose, politics does not die but gets out of hand.

Regimes in atomized societies do not artificially produce their enemies; those who were accused at the political trials were not innocent, they were very real enemies. Depoliticization of the public sphere creates millions of secret enemies. Withholding performance at the working place is not an economic act but a political one; reading Proust is not an expression of aesthetic taste but of a *Weltanschauung*; being concerned with the family is not a sign of love but of petty-bourgeois mentality. The survival techniques of the peasants are understood not as natural biological drives but as evil "anti-socialist" political practices. By the very act of atomization, peasants—like everybody else in the society—were granted political power; their acts became politicized.

Peasants have a long tradition of what Eu-

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foreign policy in the public schools, to help future generations of Americans be more aware of their true interests.

But in private it seems that he (at least while still in government) and many other administrative officials were willing to countenance and/or support other means to get around the lack of will endemic to our late twentieth century democracy. This is where the notion of "special operations"—activity such as North's "Project Democracy" to arm the *contras*—comes in. Super-secret diplomacy and military aid, carried out by a specially trained, elite group, becomes necessary when the institutions of our guilt-ridden democracy—the press, the media, the professional foreign policy bureaucracy, or the Congress—can't or won't muster the will to face foreign threats, or when they show signs of actively opposing such necessary action. McFarlane himself never put it quite so bluntly, but Richard Secord, the retired air force general who acted as "Project Democracy's" majordomo, once did. In his 1972 Naval War College master's thesis, "Unconventional Warfare/Covert Operations as an Instrument of U.S. Foreign Policy," Secord argued that, in such operations, a top-level U.S. agency, "probably the National Security Council," should take charge, brushing aside the concerns of the bureaucracy, press, academia, and Congress.

There is no reason to suppose Secord has ever changed his mind. Indeed, the defiant Secord seemed to have waived his Fifth Amendment rights, which he had previously made liberal use of, in order to defend this point of view in front of the committees and the world. He seemed to want to mount an offensive on behalf of the North mindset, since no administration official had had the nerve to do so when the operation was exposed. Indeed, in the immediate wake of Attorney General Ed Meese's disclosure of the diversion of funds, Secord drafted a speech for President Reagan to give explaining what was being done secretly in the national interest, and the reasons it had to be done. Reagan never gave that speech, so Secord gave the gist of it himself to the committee.

What Secord, McFarlane, North, and several other players in the administration's secret government-within-a-government have in common is that all of them got their first sense of the meaning of "late twentieth century democracy" in Vietnam. There they and their country were defeated, and they attributed the American pullout to the "distempers" of the media, Congress, and the diplomatic bureaucracy, all of which, to varying degrees, opposed U.S. involvement. Thus it was in Vietnam that the North mentality was really born. These military men weren't about to see that defeat repeated elsewhere. One of the most riveting moments of the entire proceedings came when McFarlane reflected on the motives which led North to undertake his covert activities in support of the *contras*. "He is quite cynical about government . . ." McFarlane said,

> when it became a matter of association with the *contra* movement . . . where we had made a commitment to people that he could see we were just about to break . . . he couldn't be a party to that. Now there are simple kinds of platitudinous judgments [North mentioned] here and there that losing a war in Vietnam was a matter that was done extremely legally, and that he didn't see the justification for how we could again be party to the same thing.

It is deeply ironic that the roots of the administration's crusade on behalf of the *contras* should lie so clearly—so personally—in the Vietnam experience. Usually the right blames the left for invoking the "Vietnam analogy" to argue against deeper American involvement in Nicaragua. Yet all along the Reagan right was using its own very different Vietnam analogy to justify (largely to itself) a

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gene Genovese describes as resistance in accommodation and accommodation in resistance.[6] We have records of cheating the landlord in the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the so-called Methodus Decimationis from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reveals the techniques the church used against the peasants who tried to deceive the tithe collectors. In the late 1940s and early 1950s there were still peasants in the villages who remembered the stories told by their grandparents who had been serfs before 1848. And this was just after World War II, when the peasants tried everything possible to survive the billeting of the German, Hungarian, and Soviet armies. It was the repetitive performance, the reexperience of known forms, as Victor Turner calls it, that helped the peasants to keep alive these useful memories.

Peasants sometimes have exceptionally good memories. Eric Hobsbawm writes that in a remote village in the Peruvian highlands in 1963 the peasants were able to recall without any written documents the exact distribution of the land as it had been determined in 1607.[7] In Hungary the peasants remembered that during the late Middle Ages and early modern times the old folks in the Transylvanian villages always swore falsely when questioned about the exact quantity of the harvest. While they made the oath—according to the old Rumanian formula they swore to God, to the sun, to salt, and to the church—they would breathe into their fur cap to hide the soul there and after the false oath they were able to absorb their clean soul from the lambskin cap. As their forefathers hid the lambs with the Ruthenians, who were not obliged to pay the lamb tithe, after 1945 the peasants hid their animals with the gypsies, who were exempt from delivery obligations. The kulaks transferred their animals to the small peasants, small peasants to their relatives in the cities. They had special techniques for hiding sheep in the well, for slaughtering pigs during the night by the light of the floating wick, for milking the cows secretly, for keeping chickens and even pigs under the bed. The peasants were allowed to slaughter their pigs only after the whole village fulfilled the delivery obligations. But compared to the prewar figures, the number of private—so-called "black"—slaughterings was increasing while state slaughterings were down considerably.

By 1953 the percentage of peasants who had been imprisoned and sent to internment camps exceeded 20 percent of the total village population. The number of peasants in prison was not only a sign of the determination of the government and the escalation of terror, but of the extent of the peasants' resistance. The history of brutality is not only the story of horrors but the story of widespread opposition as well.

BRUTAL REPRESSION GAVE BIRTH to traditional violence. From the archives of the Supreme Court one can reconstruct the ethnography of the agricultural techniques of the period. Delivery officers were killed by scythe, hoe, and pitchfork, were beaten by thrasher, hammer, and yoke-pin; peasants used beater, sickle, cart rack, carriage beam, and axle tree against the officers. Violence sometimes took medieval forms. In 1954 in a small county town the peasants put a delivery officer's eyes out, cut off his nose and ears, and broke his head. In a nearby village a son knocked his father's brains out with an axe. The father was the village party secretary. Life was extremely violent in the countryside during the 1950s. Besides so-called "public-supply crimes" and "propaganda against the interest of the state," the most frequent cases appearing in the documents of the Supreme Court were murders and attempted murders. The increase of violence recorded in the crime statistics showed the growing tension, the increasing unrest in the countryside.

The tension was present in the everyday life of the village. The documents of the Supreme Court show that the victims of everyday "routine brutality" were in most cases members of the village community. It is not easy to reconstruct the cases. Sometimes the murder was the result of an ordinary vendetta, retaliation for the rape of a sister or a daughter, or the natural end of a dispute at the local pub. A certain amount of violence is the normal incident of village life. But the dramatic increase of everyday brutality during the 1950s in the

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countryside was a direct consequence of the brutalization of politics. When one can get a long prison sentence for nothing, when one can expect indefinite internment just for one's parents' social status before World War II, when official justice works by terror, moral constraints become weaker too.

There was a kind of basic, elementary solidarity inside the village against the authorities—in most cases seizure of property was carried out by outsiders from other villages or more often by urban workers—and so the apparatus tried to divide the village community. Sometimes kulaks were forced to levy execution on other kulaks' goods, poor peasants were obliged to give transportation when a kulak's produce was seized, family members were taken hostage as a means of pressure on the other members of the family. The authorities were not successful in increasing the amount of agricultural produce collected, but succeeded in increasing distrust in the villages. They were not able to break the strength of silent solidarity against the outside world, but managed to brutalize village life.

Documents of the Ministry of Delivery show that after the summer of 1952, the peak of the terror, it became more and more difficult to send officers to the villages. The officers, like the tithe collectors during the Middle Ages and early modern times, became frightened. The local apparatus refused to use extreme measures, more and more civil servants left the local soviets and the delivery offices, so that by the end of 1952 there was a critical shortage of officers. After the end of that year it became impossible to increase the repression.

Forcing The Regime to Change

WHAT ALL THIS DEMONSTRATES is that the economies and societies of the 1950s in Eastern and Central Europe resembled neither Stalin's high-technology precision clockwork nor the famous Polish economist Wlodzimierz Brus's "command economy." The term "command economy" presupposes the government's or the party's ability to carry out its will, to operate the economy according to the plan. But the plans were never fulfilled. The regime proved to be incapable of forcing its will on the population, and the very methods used in controlling and coercing the producers contributed to the failure of the system.

According to bookish social scientists political movements must have concrete, articulated political aims. To be understood, to be granted any political significance they have to possess what Anthony Giddens calls "discursive consciousness."[8] They must be able to write manifestoes, to leave written documents behind them; they must be capable of giving a compact political analysis to the scientist who comes to interview them. Or at least they have to employ some intellectual experts who will articulate their unconscious needs and wills. Otherwise, as Eric Hobsbawm writes, "they are prepolitical people who have not yet found, or only begun to find a specific language in which to express their aspirations about the world."[9] Or as Eugene Genovese puts it: "Strictly speaking, only insurrection represented political action. . . . From that point of view, those activities which others call 'day-to-day resistance to slavery'—stealing, lying, dissembling, shirking, murder, infanticide, suicide, arson—qualify at best as prepolitical and at worst as apolitical."[10] But as I see it, there are times and circumstances when no other kinds of action are possible, or more exactly, when these kinds of action are treated by the government as political; then actions on the micro level will have very serious consequences on the macro level.

Following Stalin's death and the uprisings in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, and East Berlin in 1953, important changes took place in most of the Eastern and Central European countries. These changes are usually explained as a direct consequence of Stalin's death and the changes that occurred in the Soviet Union. In June 1953, a Hungarian delegation was called to Moscow and when the delegation returned the whole government was changed. The majority of the delegation consisted of agricultural experts. The new prime minister—who later on, in October 1956, would become prime minister once more, and finally be executed in 1958—had been minister of agriculture in 1945 at the time of the land reform. The first and most important changes after that summer took place in agriculture, as the new govern-

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ment tried a relatively liberal course in its agricultural policy.

PERHAPS IT WOULD BE TOO STRONG an assertion to say that the peasants overthrew the government, but I do not think that I am too far from the truth when I argue that the changes were primarily the result of resistance coming from the countryside. When, because of the widespread resistance, the local apparatus was not willing to cooperate any longer with the central decision makers, when increasing the repression was no longer possible because the peasants had learned how to cope with it, there was no other alternative but some drastic change.

But without basic changes in the structure, liberalization was no alternative at all. At the first sign of liberalization everything stopped; everybody was waiting for more liberal measures. The apparatus that had become used to repression, that had learned how to use force, now became confused. And the peasants grew even more recalcitrant once they saw that the authorities were unable to act. The least successful year of the delivery system was 1954. There was no way to force the peasants to give over their produce. The prime minister was fired from the party, and the old leaders returned. There seemed to be no alternative but to increase repression once more.

But this new wave of terror could not last for long. On the morning of October 23, 1956, the very same day when the uprising started in the capital, the minister of deliveries wrote his last letter to the prime minister:

> The fact that by this time nothing serious has happened, that there is no open resistance, is due to my having ordered the delivery apparatus to show extreme patience and avoid any possible threatening situation, not to use any force which might cause open resistance. I have stopped all forced deliveries.

Those who rose in revolt were the workers and urban intellectuals. Compared to the cities, the countryside was relatively quiet. But one of the first acts of the new government was to abolish the delivery system. And when the government was overthrown in November, those who returned to power had no choice but to uphold this decree.

In the 1932 edition of the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences we find the following statement: "[T]he most marked structural distinction between a primitive society and a civilized society is the paucity of specific associations in the one and their multiplicity in the other."[11] During the last half-century convictions have not changed about these matters. In their book *The Rebellious Century*, the Tillys quote Robert Michels's book, published in 1915, and this quotation could have been the motto of the entire book: "The principle of organization is an absolutely essential condition for the political struggle of the masses."[12] And Hannah Arendt argues that the hallmark of isolation "is impotence insofar as power always comes from men acting together . . . isolated men are powerless by definition."[13]

James Scott, who in his latest book—*Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*—argues for the possibility of individual, unorganized forms of resistance, thinks that

> [w]here institutionalized politics is formal, overt, concerned with systematic, de jure change, everyday resistance is . . . concerned largely with immediate, de facto gains. Most subordinate classes are, after all, far less interested in changing the larger structures of the state and the law than in what Hobsbawm has appropriately called "working the system . . . to their minimum disadvantage."[14]

And although I agree with Scott that peasants resist the day-to-day workings of the system and do not attack the central power structure, the symbolic locus, the notion of working the system to their minimum disadvantage suggests what Charles Tilly called the reactive form of collective action.[15] This implies that the peasants defended a traditional structure, a traditional culture against the progressive penetration of the modern state, that they fought for an important but reactionary cause, and that their fight was inevitably doomed to failure.

Without romanticizing the interpretation, my sources prove that the peasants were for something truly important. The peasants fought against anti-ecological, anti-economical, inhuman centralization, against a system that forced them to give up local ecological

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wisdom, to produce everything independently of the quality of land, independently of the requirements of crop rotation, independently of common-sense experience. The delivery system forced them to seed grain in four consecutive years on the same parcel of land. The central authorities determined the timetable of all farm works. According to their timetable the peasant would have to seed in January. And these are just two instances. The system tried to force the peasants to give up their rational interest, and give up the ideas they had about the interest of the society as a whole. To seed in January, to give over all the cows, to slaughter all the pigs are acts against the public interest, against every sort of rationality.

By resisting the workings of the system, the peasants defended their right to rationality. Had they done what they were told, they would have given up the possibility of rational calculation, and had they given up the possibility of rational calculation they would have given up their human quality. By defending their right to self-directedness the peasants were defending their autonomy, their right to be human.

As John Rawls formulates it in his article, "Justice as Fairness," people can be free only if "they regard themselves as self-originating sources of valid claims . . . [only if] they think their claims have weight apart from being derived from duties or obligations owed to society."[16] What the regime tried to do was to force the peasants to give up not only their claims, but their obligations owed to society as well. The interest of society was to have a continuous supply of foodstuffs, but by fulfilling the obligations of the actual campaigns the peasants would have prevented any future supply.

By guarding their right to self-employment, the right of economic autonomy, thus fighting for a purely economic cause, they were guarding their right to self-determination, and guarding the collective interest of society. And we can say that their resistance defended the state as well. Had they fulfilled their obligations they would have caused a critical shortage the consequences of which would have led to serious political instability. By resisting, the peasants defended the regime. Fulfilling the obligations would have undermined the political system. But by resisting, the peasants forced the system to change. Resistance by accommodation forced the regime to accommodate to the resistance.

The peasants' actions grew out of the historical tradition of village life. The acts of resistance had their conventional place in everyday life, and their conventional meaning for the peasants. But since the state's interpretation of these acts differed significantly from the peasants', the actual and the conventional meanings of the acts of resistance were not the same. The peasants forced the regime to change, but the regime forced the peasants to reinterpret their own actions.

The routine acts of survival changed to acts of political resistance; apolitical peasants changed to political enemies; politics became equivalent to cheating, dissimulation, and suspicion. The political culture became a culture of mutual lies.

From a closer look, all the important and long-lasting economic and social reforms in all the Central European countries appear as nothing but the legalization of already existing illegal or semilegal practices. What seems to be the work of the professional reformers (experimentation with and revitalization of the market, the coexistence of the small and the big in agriculture, the convergence of the first and the second economies, the granting of concessions to small-scale private enterprises, the liberalization of the planning mechanism) is in fact the consequence of continuous atomized resistance. The reformers act as intermediaries; they have the opportunity and the skills to articulate the pragmatic consciousness of the atomized citizens, of individualized producers. They have access to the party bureaucrats and government officials, they are members of the different consultative bodies, they are able to seize the opportunity and persuade the officials to legalize the illegal underworld—at least part of it.

Between the peasants—or the producers, in general—and the professional reformers there is what Marshall Sahlins—following Hilary

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Putnam—calls a "division of linguistic labor."[17] Reformers assign a different value to acts of resistance; their interpretation differs from the peasants' and from that of the apparatus. "Apart from the influences of the context, this division of meaningful labor is, broadly speaking, a function of the differences among people in social experience and interest. What is a 'fluttering bird (of some kind)' to me is a 'diseased sparrow hawk' to you. . . ." What for the peasants was the natural drive for survival and for the state the conspiracy of the class enemy, was for the reformers the sure sign of disease. And the latter saw how to put the amorphous, atomized acts into an institutional framework. The emergence of the reformers was already a sign of the regime's accommodation to the resistance. But the actual reforms, the legalization of illegal practices, marked the real change of the system—as a consequence of the atomized resistance as the reformers articulated it and the state interpreted this articulation.

Centralization and Direct Power

BEFORE THE SOCIALIZATION OF THE ECONOMY and the centralization of the society, before individualization and atomization, there was no direct relationship between the political center and the peasants. There has always been somebody standing between the symbolic and real center of power on the one side and the political periphery, the countryside, the peasants working in the fields, on the other. The village had some administrative and legal autonomy, the church mediated between the peasants and the secular powers, and there were always landlords who exploited the producers, middlemen who could be blamed for hoarding in hard times. There was a real buffer zone protecting the central authorities. John Walter and Keith Wringston observed:

> To meet the metaphysical problem posed by dearth [in early modern Europe], there existed a body of explanation which rendered the arbitrariness of the weather intelligible if not predictable; a body of explanation which was principally the reserve of the church and of the more moralistic, especially puritan laity. This was the doctrine of judgments.[18]

But besides this kind of explanation there was another main strand of popular explanation about dearth and its causes: the secret activities of the middlemen in the victualing trade who artificially and purposefully produced shortages even in times of plenty. These suspicions "were confirmed by the government. For at a time when such inherited ideas were being undermined by the realities of the economic life, the state chose to articulate and reinforce them."

Loss of Community

BUT IN CENTRAL EUROPE, after 1945, the atheist state was not in the position to blame God, or interpret economic hardships as a metaphysical punishment. By centralization, local autonomy was lost. After the land reform there were no more landlords, and the middlemen were nationalized. There was nobody, nothing left to blame but the state, the government, the party, the system. The party tried to find scapegoats, to divide the society, to deflect attention from the responsibility of the political center. But the kulak was the most unsuitable person to blame. Unlike the middlemen, the kulaks lived in the villages where there was no anonymity. The peasants knew the hardships of the kulaks, knew that half of the kulaks had no land at all, and that typically they were worse off than the small peasants. They were the real victims of the regime. It was most unlikely for the peasants to imagine that the kulaks were responsible for the shortages and hardships. And since the economy was individualized, and every producer had his or her individual quota, the small peasants would not have been better off had they pressed the kulaks to fulfill their obligations. One was not able to gain anything by anti-kulak sentiments. The delivery system eliminated real class divisions in the villages, making the party, the government, the system more vulnerable. There was no longer a buffer zone; the atomized peasants not only had political power, they had *direct* power. Anything they did had a direct effect on the very center of political authority.

The stronger the coercion and the more extensive totalitarian rule becomes, the smaller the space left for autonomous human exis-

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tence. As Barrington Moore observed, in a totalitarian society there is no "social and cultural space, no more or less protected enclaves within which dissatisfied or oppressed groups have some room to develop distinctive social arrangements, cultural traditions."[19] But it is the tragic irony of terror that by the expansion of regulation, less becomes enough for breaking the rule. Acts that do not have any political significance under more democratic conditions are labeled and treated as serious political actions in a centralized system. In this sense, the expansion of coercion creates more room for resistance.

In asylums, as Erving Goffman writes, "[we] find a multitude of homely little histories, each in its way a movement of liberty."[20] "There is a sense," says Michael Walzer, "in which oppression makes men free, and the more radical the oppression the more radical the freedom."[21] What Walzer meant here was the freedom from obligations. When people are oppressed they do not owe anything to the state. But oppression makes people free in another sense as well: when there is no room for open political activity, people can use whatever means are available to them. Under such circumstances there are no formal rules for political activity. To be politically active it is not necessary to join an organization, to lobby for legislation, to sign petitions, to raise money for political advertisements, to agitate for a majority vote. Everybody can use whatever he or she finds appropriate.

In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* Foucault writes:

> [P]ower is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere . . . power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations. . . . Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. . . . These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal. . . . The points, knots, or focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at varying densities. . . .[22]

In the context of the Foucaultian vision these sentences have a completely different meaning from my interpretation of the atomized resistance. As Michael Walzer argues, "Foucault is concerned not with the dispersion of power to the extremities of the political system, but with its exercise at the extremities."[23]

But by taking these sentences out of their context, one can arrive at a completely anti-Foucaultian conclusion: since complete coercion can be maintained only by granting power to individuals at all points of the system, the individuals are not completely powerless. The totalitarian system has to delegate power to the lower levels of the hierarchy, to individuals in order to make the closed structure of power complete. Although the individual's power is but part of the structure of the system—it was delegated to him in order to guard the existing power relations—and there is no other ground of resistance but the ground created by the same system, still, resistance even on the terms of the system may be fateful for the political structure.

THE CENTRALIZED STATE was not prepared for, had no technique to cope with, millions of individual acts—which were the response to centralization—and was too inflexible to defend itself against challenges from all directions. The response of the state was more extensive centralization, which, in turn, gave birth to new individual actions. As the possibilities of open, formal political actions narrowed, resistance became "present everywhere in the power network . . . there [was] no single locus of great Refusal," which would have been easy for a centralized state to liquidate. The centralized state became a victim of centralization.

According to the Foucaultian text and intention: "resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power." Perhaps "never" is too strong a statement. But as I argued earlier, by resisting the claims of the state the peasants were defending the state they were fighting against as well.

At each point of time, the centralized state is a momentary reflection of the historical fight going on between the forces of centralization and the resistance against it. Naturally, as a result of the course of events, the strength, aspirations, and ideology of centralization change. And—at least theoretically—there

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may be a point where careful analysis can conclude that the mutual accommodation process has basically altered the original political structure.

To reach this point is not easy at all. Not only because of the rigidity of the political system, but because the atomized mood of resistance blocks the formation of a democratic political culture. After long decades of extreme but successful individual, atomized resistance, it is hard to learn to act openly, to act in "concert," to trust one another.

The actions available to the peasants in the villages were simple actions in Paul Ricoeur's sense, actions "which require no previous action in order to be done."[24] There was no possibility of any previous action, conspiracies were too risky, and since everyone was atomized, it was too costly to organize.

Although the actors were atomized, the framework and rules of the ruined community were still preserved by everyday coexistence. Behind the individual there still stood remnants of community, the village that had lost its autonomy but which was reproduced by the daily repetition of everyday life. Repetition preserved that "tacitly employed mutual knowledge" which was the repertoire of the atomized resistance. There was no possibility to speak, but there was no need to speak either. "What cannot be said . . . is what has to be done"[25]—as Anthony Giddens wrote.

And the peasants knew; they saw what the others were doing secretly. The survival of the village was exactly equivalent to the successful resistance of the individual; and the individual welfare to the welfare of other individuals. The more the peasants succeeded in hiding their produce, the higher the prices rose on the black market. The higher the prices on the black market, the less incentive the peasants had to give over their goods. The more successful the peasants were, the more incentive they had to resist. It was the invisible hand of resistance, the micro actions, having a profound effect on the macro sphere of politics. The actors understood each other perfectly; meaning was not detached from their action.

They were atomized, but not completely lonely. They knew that they were part of a secret mass of more than two million. They knew that even the apparatus joined them secretly, that individual officials hoped that the peasants' resistance would provide the necessary alibi for their survival. There were government agents, secret police, military in the villages, too. But the peasants had their own language of gestures, which was common to all; it was not necessary to ask questions, since the discourse referred to immediate, concrete things. They just lived their lives and their way of living gradually changed the political system around them.

It was not only the political system that changed, but slowly the village community as well. Each individual had to rely on him- or herself, and although the individual resistance helped the whole community, it was not a communal undertaking. The peasants had to lie constantly to the authorities, success was dependent on dissimulation. As the peasant understood that the only way to success was through strictly individual, silent action, the community was undermined. There was no real possibility of fighting for the community, and there was nobody who would have taken the risk to fight for it. Cooperative members were not fighting for higher incomes, but for the security of the household plot. Employees at the state-owned farms were not interested in the right of collective bargaining, but in guarantees of the second economy. Peasants did not fight for village autonomy, but for access to the market. Both the working of the centralizing state and the successful individual resistance against it helped to undermine the basis of communality. The price of changing the political system was a change in the community. The more skilled the peasants became in fighting the system, the more lonely they became in the village. By isolating themselves from each other in the course of the resistance, they completed the work of centralization: individualization in the sphere of production, atomization in the public sphere, isolation in the sphere of private life.

"[S]o long as [people] can live their ordinary lives," said Henri Lefebvre, "relations are constantly re-established."[26] But the peasant is the

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archetype of the conceptual artist. As Marcel Duchamp said when he stopped painting: "My art would be that of living: each second, each breath is a work inscribed nowhere." And as anything is good for such an art, so anything would do for resistance: life is art, life is resistance. "Any sound could be music," said John Cage, and "anybody could be an artist," proclaimed Andy Warhol.

It was not the historian, but the state that gave this special meaning to everyday life. It was not the peasants who invented this art form of resistance; they were forced into their role. There is no art without reception, no resistance without reaction. The interpretation of the state was necessary for the peasant's life to become resistance. The state had a vision, similar to John Cage's and Andy Warhol's, and the peasants had no choice but gradually to accept the meaning ascribed to their lives.

Yes, the work was inscribed nowhere. The peasants were unable to engage in any extraordinary actions. They lived their lives, produced nonevents. Just the opposite of what François Simiand, and following him Fernand Braudel, called "l'histoire événementielle."[27] They not only just lived their lives; they were engaged in producing hiatuses, holes in the texture of history—making the historian's life very difficult. The historian is not in a position to uncover facts that "are buried in documents, just like, as Leibnitz would have said, the statue of Hercules was lying dormant in the veins of marble."[28] The task is, rather, to find the traces of nonobjects hidden by the peasants in the ground. While marble survives, the hidden food vanishes beneath the surface. Still, even the rotten grain, unsuitable for human consumption, is a trace of the resistance. The forgotten potato is a sign of success.

Peasants make nonobjects: food that cannot be found, grain that has never been harvested, land that is nonexistent, people who are phantomized. The technique of the resistance is the nonevent, the means is the nonobject, the actors are anonymous. We can rely only on the "archives of repression"[29]—as a distinguished Italian historian called it—on the documents of the Ministry of Supervision, the Ministry of Deliveries, the archives of the Supreme Court.

But the peasants do not talk in the courtrooms. Just like their forebears who in 1815, in a small Transylvanian village hidden in the snowcapped mountains, cornered a fellow peasant in the village church. The peasants suspected that he had disclosed the real amount of the harvest to the tax authorities. They pushed him to the altar, and without saying a word crushed him to death with the weight of their bodies. The whole village stood silent in the church, just as later on they stood silent in front of the judges. Nobody said a word, there was no sound . . . except, as Simon & Garfunkel would have said: "The sounds of silence." □

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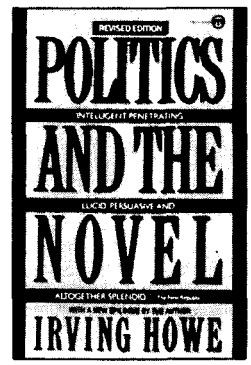
POLITICS AND THE NOVEL

By Irving Howe
With a New Epilogue



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Elaine Hoffman Baruch

The Female Body and the Male Mind

Reconsidering Simone de Beauvoir

Forty years ago Simone de Beauvoir sat in front of a blank sheet of paper at the Café des Deux Magots, on the Boulevard St. Germain in Paris, wanting to write about herself:

> I realized that the first question to come up was: What has it meant to me to be a woman. At first I thought I could dispose of that pretty quickly. I had never had any feeling of inferiority, no one had ever said to me: "You think that way because you're a woman"; my femininity had never been irksome to me in any way. "For me," I said to Sartre, "you might almost say it just hasn't counted." "All the same, you weren't brought up in the same way as a boy would have been; you should look into it further!"

And so her book *The Second Sex* was born. It was, in a sense, Jean-Paul Sartre's baby. But when published in France, it was viewed as illegitimate. The public was not pleased by Beauvoir's discovery that "this world was a masculine world," and that her "childhood had been nourished by myths forged by men." She was labeled "unsatisfied, frigid, priapic, nymphomaniac, lesbian, a hundred times aborted," as she tells us in her autobiographical *Force of Circumstance.*

> I was a poor, neurotic girl, repressed, frustrated, and cheated by life, a virago, a woman who'd never been made love to properly, envious, embittered, and bursting with inferiority complexes with regard to men, while with regard to women I was eaten to the bone by resentment.

Her friend Albert Camus threw the book across the floor, saying it made men look ridiculous. Not surprisingly, considering its attack on religion and the traditional family, the Pope banned it.

The American edition of *The Second Sex* is not quite the whole story. The translator, H.M. Parshley, omitted large chunks—mainly those having to do with women in history, the drudgery of housework, and the nineteenth-century feminist movement. Still, there is enough. In English the paperback runs to some seven hundred pages, a marvelous source of literary criticism, analysis of myth, physiological, psychological, economic, and social commentary on women.

Nonetheless, *The Second Sex* is a child of its times. It is pervaded by the hierarchical dualism that has marked most of the thinking of Western male culture, which has placed mind above body, man above woman, and culture above nature, a dualism that current feminists are attacking. It's not just the hierarchy of the terms that they are questioning but the concept of dualism itself. Still, *The Second Sex* remains an extraordinary achievement for that necessary phase of feminism which holds that women can—and should—do everything that men do. Beauvoir's life too revealed a dramatic fissure—between the theory of sexual equality and the practice of an eroticized subordination in her relation with Sartre. It is some of the complexities in her work and her life that I would like to explore here.

As a member of the existentialist movement that grew up around Sartre in the 1940s, Beauvoir was nurtured on such heady concepts as engagement, freedom, transcendence. Existentialism posits a philosophical division between Subject and Other, similar in some ways to Hegel's paradigm of master-slave. Whereas Sartre felt that all people could be the Other in relation to others, Beauvoir's brilliance lay in showing that these were divisions that actually marked relations between the two sexes. In relation to men, she said, all women are the Other. Unlike men, who represent consciousness and activity in the world (what Beauvoir calls transcendence or the *pour-soi*, for-itself),

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women represent being (immanence or the *en-soi*, in-itself) and are therefore aligned with nature.

Yet there is nothing natural in this opposition, according to Beauvoir. "One is not born but rather one becomes a woman.... It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch." A problem that Beauvoir did not confront, given her dualistic system, is who will be the Other once women have equality. Will the relation between men and women then be reversed, or will the Other be drawn from a category other than sex? What she does do in *The Second Sex* is try to account for women's position as Other through theories of biology, psychoanalysis, and economics. Despite her weighty evidence, it is comforting that she finds none of these sufficient.

Discerning "Truth" Through Biology

HER FIRST AND ARGUABLY MOST PROMINENT chapter is "The Data of Biology." It appears in volume one, entitled "Facts and Myths": significantly, Beauvoir places biology in the category of facts, unlike some feminist scientists today who see traditional biology itself, at least the branch that treats of sexual differences, as part of patriarchal mythology. Although science has been remarkably successful in discovering empirical "truths" that do not threaten the power structure, such as the presence of abnormal cells, it has been far less so in dealing with those parts of the body that have symbolic value. "Truth," Michel Foucault has argued, "is produced through discourse, and its production is imbued with relations of power." In a sense Beauvoir's recognition that this is "a masculine world" exposes a similar "truth."

Beauvoir's historical overview of the respective functions of the two sexes in reproduction notes many of the follies of the past, such as the Aristotelian notion that the fetus is produced by the union of sperm and menstrual blood. One might think that her awareness of such past distortions would make her skeptical of male-oriented descriptions of biology[1]; but as with her male contemporaries, echoes of Victorian courtship sound in Beauvoir's description of the romance between the "wholly alive" sperm and the "stationary" egg which "passively awaits fertilization."Beauvoir argues that the ways of a society cannot be deduced from biology, but what she doesn't recognize sufficiently is that biological "facts" can be deduced from the ways of a society.

Unlike feminists of the 1970s who would seek to minimize biological differences, Beauvoir sees them as crucial. Perhaps because *The Second Sex* was written before the legalization of contraception and abortion in France (brought about in large measure through her efforts in such organizations as *Choisir*—Choice), she sees women's "enslavement by reproduction" as the main sexual differentiator: "the individuality of the female is opposed by the interest of the species; it is as if she were possessed by foreign forces—alienated." In contrast, the male body does not impede movement towards transcendence, for it does not have to be "sacrificed" to the species in pregnancy and childbirth. But man is not happy with his body either, according to Beauvoir, since it too is subject to change and death.

Nonetheless, it is the female body, particularly the mother's body, that Beauvoir (and dualists, in general) sees as particularly loathsome. Beauvoir's description (in a later chapter) of how pregnancy transforms—indeed distorts—the body could scarcely be outdone by the most virulent misogynist and is one reason why the current generation of feminists does not always find her sympathetic:

> Ensnared by nature, the pregnant woman is plant and animal, a stock-pile of colloids, an incubator, an egg; she scares children proud of their young, straight bodies and makes young people titter contemptuously because she is a human being, a conscious and free individual, who has become life's passive instrument.

Notwithstanding Beauvoir's male-identified biology and value system—what is human is male—we must still call her conclusions feminist, an ascription she did not accept until decades later. For despite what she sees as the hindrances of female biology, she urges women to struggle for transcendence, for a place in the public world. The frailties of biology are handi-

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caps that must be overcome—like congenital asthma, I suppose (or perhaps like what Sartre calls the facticity of situation). They cannot be used in "bad faith" as excuses to avoid freedom.[2]

Toward a Feminist Psychoanalysis

MANY CRITICS CLAIM THAT in *The Second Sex* Beauvoir rejects psychoanalysis in her treatment of the woman as Other. Even though she herself might agree, I do not think this is true. What she does reject is the traditional reading of Freud; but she also points ahead in some startling ways to a revisionist psychoanalysis that might be called feminist.

Within a few pages, she forcibly illustrates the distinctions between the penis as vulnerable biological organ and what Jacques Lacan and his disciples would refer to as the phallus, the always erect symbol of male privilege within the patriarchal order. It is the latter that women envy. Not anatomy but culture confers privilege—or denies it. So Beauvoir insists despite her negative view of female biology.

Unlike Freud but rather like Melanie Klein, Beauvoir recognizes the strength of the pre-Oedipal period, which is only now receiving widespread attention. She describes lucidly the difficulties that little boys face in having to turn away from the mother as the first object of identification. But unlike contemporary theorists, she does not go on to connect this forced separation with the masculine formation of a dualistic worldview that reduces women to objects. She does, however, anticipate the new geography of female sexuality that dismisses Freud's phallocentric view of the little girl as an *homme manqué* with a stunted penis, and that grants her organs of her own.[3]

Still, Beauvoir does deny one of the central credos of psychoanalysis, whether traditional or revisionist—the importance of the unconscious—because she feels that such a concept limits choice. Here she sounds very much like the American feminists of the 1970s. In contrast, some feminist theorists are now turning to psychoanalysis to show how the body influences the mind and how what appears to be rational is in fact fueled by desire that is often repressed. But Beauvoir is not interested in this mediation. It is not feeling or body but mind and intellect that she exalts.

Also, her denial of the unconscious sometimes causes Beauvoir to see the myths of women, for example, those of the Virgin Mary and the temptress, as mere mystifications and devices for control. But such myths reveal the place of woman in the imagination even more than in social reality. They will not go away unless attention is paid to their invisible dwelling place. They may not go away even then, but we will understand them better. We can agree with Beauvoir that there is no fixed human nature—actually what she believes is that there is no fixed woman's nature—and still question her conclusion that "perhaps the myth of woman will some day be extinguished." The myths may change or diminish in force as men share in child-rearing tasks and as women enter the public world. They might conceivably even disappear if reproduction is ever taken out of the body. But as long as women bear children and there is an incest barrier, women will remain objects of mystery for men and to some extent for women as well.

Despite her dislike, Beauvoir's picture of myth is so rich, so subtle compared with later ideological attacks on sexual "stereotypes," that one wonders if her conscious denial of unconscious sources should be taken seriously. As a professed socialist, Beauvoir perhaps saw an emphasis on fantasy and feeling as bourgeois or regressive, "a way of returning women to their subordinate ideological place within the dominant culture," as Cora Kaplan puts it in another context. Part of the new feminism, however, would like a merger of social and psychoanalytic theory to explain women's placement—or displacement—in the world.

Supply and Demand

GIVEN BEAUVOIR'S SOCIALIST IDEALS, her account of economic explanations for women as Other is probably the weakest section in *The Second Sex*. "As for the content," she later wrote in *Force of Circumstance*, "I should take a more materialist position today in the first volume. I should base the notion of woman as *other* and the Manichean argument it entails not on an idealistic and *a priori* struggle of

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consciences, but on the facts of supply and demand. . . . "

Current feminist theoreticians believe that the examination of women's lives, with their invisible and unpaid labor, both in the household and as reproducers of the work force, brings one to deeper insights into materiality than Marx's analysis of the (male) proletariat. Beauvoir does not consider these aspects in either *The Second Sex* or her later work. In the materialism section, however, she does temper her negativism on women's biology: if a woman "procreates voluntarily and if society comes to her aid during pregnancy and is concerned with child welfare, the burdens of maternity are light and can be easily offset by suitable adjustments in working conditions." These are ideas that some Scandinavian countries have tried to introduce into policy, with varying degrees of success.

When she wrote *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir believed that socialism would end the inequality of women. She later gave up her hopes for worldwide revolution, urging women to fight for their rights independently. Only in the early 1970s did she proclaim herself a feminist, a quarter of a century after writing *The Second Sex*.

It was in the 1970s also that Beauvoir would argue that she was less fearful of maternity than of marriage and the family as enslaving institutions. For this reason, she was opposed to Betty Friedan's idea of wages for housework. Unlike the so-called material feminists early in this century and Dolores Hayden today, whose architectural plans seek to eliminate the split between home and work, Beauvoir wanted women out of the house altogether and in public life. She does not consider domestic labor to be work, nor does she recognize the fact that most men work—outside the home—in alienating jobs, which indeed is the case today with most women.

Brilliant as *The Second Sex* is in its description of women's position in a phallocratic world, it may now also be seen as bound by the ropes of white, Western, middle-class culture. We might go further and say that Beauvoir is a prisoner of gender also—masculine gender. For her, culture is unrelievedly male. And although *The Second Sex* is doubtless the germinal book for what is called liberal feminism, Beauvoir never accepted any other form. One strong current of feminism that Beauvoir dismisses is sometimes called cultural feminism. This feminism stresses sexual difference but transvaluates it, attributing positive values to traditionally female feelings and behavior (what had been disparaged by the general culture before). In France writers such as Hélène Cixous advocate an *écriture féminine*, a style of writing that cultivates difference, as if to capture the fluidity of the female body, with its experience of blood, milk, and cycles. The journal *Questions Féministes*, founded in the late 1970s under the general editorship of Beauvoir, has condemned this approach, seeing it as a tool for patriarchy rather than liberation.

There is a third and perhaps major direction in feminism that Beauvoir was also unsympathetic to at the end of her life, one which seeks to transcend dualist oppositions altogether. Many feminists now see as liberating what Beauvoir saw as oppressive: motherhood, for example, the nurturing of life as a conscious act that involves risk and choice—and growth. Precisely what Beauvoir saw as the major barrier keeping women from full participation in humanity, this third group of feminists sees as a bridge to a greater humanity. They feel that bearing and nurturing a child can help to eliminate the split between nature and culture, body and mind, feeling and action, change and stasis. In this last sense, men can mother also, and are doing so increasingly.

". . . [I]t is not in giving life but in risking life that man is raised above the animal; that is why superiority has been accorded in humanity not to the sex that brings forth but to that which kills," wrote Beauvoir in the 1940s, expressing a worldview that she never substantially changed. It is significant that she doesn't see the risk of life in childbirth as a transcendent act. Nor does she question the male valorization of hunting and war. But by now it is not only women who reject this view.

The Second Sex, never seeing relatedness, community, and cooperation as positive values, presents individual achievement as the supreme goal of human existence. Beauvoir's

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contribution to humanism and feminism was to urge upon women such achievement rather than self-sacrifice. What contemporary feminism wants is achievement and intersubjectivity—a blend Beauvoir tried to have in her own life.

The problem that forerunners, the *avant-garde*, face is that they are always criticized later for not having been *avant* enough. Because they go so far, we are angry that they are not gods. Beauvoir presents a clearly defined world of supposed reason, truth, and objectivity as one side of her polarized view and insists that women engage in it and gain all the rewards that men have had previously. She is eons away from the current attempt to transcend binary polarization. It remains for a new theorist of Beauvoir's stature to explore the place of women in this new world, and to point the way to further crossings of the gender line into new landscapes of the human.

ALTHOUGH IT IS PRIMARILY FOR *THE SECOND SEX* that Beauvoir will be remembered, her accomplishments as a novelist are also noteworthy. Her dualism appears there as well. In 1954, Beauvoir received the Prix Goncourt for her novel *The Mandarins*, an extraordinary evocation of the life of postwar intellectuals of the left in France and to some extent a *roman à clef*. The book received highly mixed reviews in this country, in part for its anti-Americanism, also revealed in Beauvoir's travel journal *Day by Day*. (In any conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, Beauvoir opted for the latter, even after she became aware of and denounced the Stalinist labor camps. This is one of her major blind spots.) Yet *The Mandarins* is remarkably powerful with intensely alive if humorless characters, a lyrical rendering of nature, and a fascinating experiment with point of view. Most of the book is written in the third person, except for the treatment of Anne, in some ways the character closest to Beauvoir. Anne speaks in the first person, and is, perhaps revealingly, a psychoanalyst. Despite these surprises, the novel remains rooted in the bourgeois rather than an avant-garde tradition. The politicized figures are all men, the apolitical ones—women. Should we fault Beauvoir for this split? Perhaps, considering the engagement of her own life, at least after World War II. But the choice was deliberate. Beauvoir saw the novel as a public, rather than as an experimental, genre that aims at credibility, unlike autobiography, where one can be singular, eccentric. As a theoretician, Beauvoir took great risks. As a novelist, she didn't. In her life, she took (or thought she took) the greatest risks of all.

Life with Sartre

EVEN PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT READ BEAUVOIR know of her involvement with Sartre. Like Héloïse and Abelard, theirs was one of the great academic romances. Books brought them together at the Sorbonne, where they both took advanced degrees in philosophy. Sartre, who fantasized himself as the "writer-knight" in his autobiography, *Les Mots*, became Beauvoir's rescuer. In *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, her autobiographical *Bildungsroman*, she describes him as fulfilling her adolescent fantasy: "Sartre corresponded exactly to the dream-companion I had longed for since I was fifteen: he was the double in whom I found all my burning aspiration raised to the pitch of incandescence." Sartre, only a little less than Abelard, was the tutor/lover. And like Héloïse and Abelard in the Middle Ages, Beauvoir and Sartre epitomize our own age's ambivalent attitudes toward sex and love.

Bourgeois as much as bohemian, soulmates who lived apart, they speak to the modern desire for primacy of the couple *and* multiple sexual experience at the same time. It was Sartre who set the terms of their nonmarriage pact, which included "perfect honesty about everything," an honesty that he perhaps desired as much for exhibitionistic gratification as for a means of control. In what may be the most intellectual euphemism for infidelity on record, the two pledged an "essential love" to each other but allowed for "contingent" loves with others. Did Beauvoir accept these conditions because she was the essential one? Perhaps. But they hardly fit the romantic or even existential definition of love, which posits an absolute love that allows room for no other. (In all fairness to Sartre, he did not think such a love could exist.) Interestingly enough, in *The*

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Second Sex, Beauvoir claimed that an authentic love should assume "the contingence of the other," should recognize his lacks and limitations, and not be idolatrous. Neither could practice what they theorized.

Beauvoir had refused Sartre's early offer of marriage: "I chose what was the hardest course for me at that moment in order to safeguard the future.... I knew Sartre did not want marriage. I could not want it all by myself." It is doubtful that she wanted it either. Yet she suffers all kinds of somatic ailments over his affairs and laments the signs of age in her mirror more than the most despondent *hausfrau*—although it is perhaps unfair to attribute this disgust to sexual vulnerability alone: "I loathe my appearance now: the eyebrows slipping down toward the eyes, the bags underneath, the excessive fullness of the cheeks, and that air of sadness around the mouth that wrinkles always bring." Because of her university training and her great gifts, however, she is able to transform her hurts into metaphysical despair over death, political outrage—or into fiction. Perhaps because of her rejection of the unconscious, she never fully recognizes that her obsession with death might stem from her anger turned inwards on the self.

She too had other lovers, chosen perhaps more in retaliation than in freedom: Nelson Algren, the author of *The Man With the Golden Arm,* who figures in *The Mandarins*, and the journalist Claude Lanzmann.

> For myself, I needed some sort of distance if I were to give my heart sincerely, for there could be no question of trying to duplicate the understanding I had with Sartre. Algren belonged to another continent, Lanzmann to another generation; this too was a foreignness that kept a balance in our relationship.

It does not seem that Sartre was so careful about his balancing act. In the end, he adopted a young woman, Arlette Elkahim. Beauvoir too had adopted Sylvie le Bon in what she described as a freely chosen relationship. But Sartre had wanted to marry Arlette, one of his mistresses; here Beauvoir prevailed. Still it was the incestuous daughter who inherited all of Sartre's unpublished papers while Beauvoir, Sartre's "one special reader" for whom he wrote, had no access to them.

Ambiguity may be the one clear mark of Beauvoir's thought and feeling at the end. Her picture of Sartre's last years in *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre* is problematic at best. Though some critics have praised the book for its truthfulness, it is less a depiction of the vulnerabilities of a great man in old age than a quiet revenge. The conversations and particularly the commentary present the male in all *his* Otherness (a theme taken up in a different way in her book *The Coming of Age).* No longer the transcendent being, he is man crumbling.

Divested of all his strength and even shame, the philosopher has mental lapses, he overturns his soup, fouls his clothes. One wonders why all the painful details are necessary. Beauvoir would probably plead honesty. One suspects that it is more her sense of betrayal that he is no longer a hero. "A fallen god is not a man; he is a fraud," she had written in *The Second Sex.* Actually Sartre seems to bear all his physical limitations with a stoic's calm, but Beauvoir does not admire him for this. At one time he could make her feel as secure as the idea of God did when she was a child, but at the end of his life he suffers a de-idealization and de-idolization at Beauvoir's pen, in part at least because the body has taken over the mind. Still, she writes with some unconscious irony: "It is in itself splendid that we were able to live our lives in harmony for so long."

Like Sartre, Beauvoir sought to create herself. She succeeded in making her life an exemplum but not always in the way she would have liked. She is as much an illustration of the "woman in love" described in *The Second Sex* as a representative of freedom. In that sense she bears some similarity to Mary Wollstonecraft, the eighteenth-century author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.* Wollstonecraft too had argued that women were constructed by the social order, but in relation to her lover Gilbert Imlay if not to her later husband, William Godwin, Wollstonecraft was a romantic victim, subject to betrayal by her feelings. Perhaps Beauvoir writes so well about this subject because in some sense she was betrayed too. Autobiography objectified becomes theory.

But if Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* asked in effect, "Why can't a woman be more like a man?", Sartre, at least at the end of his life,

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was asking, "Why can't a man be more like a woman?" There is an extraordinary statement by Sartre in the *Adieux* on his sexuality. I treat it here because I think it affected his philosophy and in turn that of Beauvoir. Sartre confesses that he didn't attach a great deal of importance to intercourse—he simply engaged in it because it was expected. (He too was a prisoner of gender.) "I was more a masturbator of women than a copulator. . . . I should have been quite happy naked in bed with a naked woman, caressing and kissing her, but without going as far as the sexual act." This admission, which implies a fear of women's sexual demands or at least of female sexuality, throws new light on Sartre's emphasis on holes and viscosity in his descriptions of the female sex organ in his earlier work, descriptions that Beauvoir often echoes. "The amorous act is the castration of the man; but this is above all because sex is a hole," he had written. In existential psychoanalysis, unlike Freud's, things possess objective qualities of being. Holes are bad; viscosity is bad. Ironically, considering Beauvoir's criticism, it is Freud's theory that is more emancipating for women than Sartre's. For what Sartre sees as literal truth, Freud sees as metaphor. And metaphor can perhaps be changed whereas fact cannot. It is for Sartre, at least in his earlier work, that anatomy is destiny.

"In herself woman appeals to a flesh which is to transform her into a fullness of being by penetration and dissolution," writes Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*, a statement which assumes that a man is complete in himself and that he has no envy of the specifically feminine *jouissance* or orgasm. Yet in the *Adieux* he reveals that he dislikes the term "adult male" because it distinguishes between the sexes in an odious, comic fashion. "The male is the one with a little tube between his legs." It is the experience of the total body that Sartre now seeks—that which women are supposed to experience. While some of these passages might bear witness that Sartre lacked mature genitality, they also reveal a desire for androgyny—a desire for transcendence of dualism perhaps.

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir spoke at length of women as economic parasites, forced to live vicariously. What Sartre reveals in *Adieux* is men's emotional parasitism. Because of their overvaluation of intellect, he says, men constantly look to different women to replenish their emotional resources. This is not, he implies, a good division. Had Sartre come to these conclusions sooner, his (and Beauvoir's) existential psychoanalysis might have been quite different.

But I don't think that it is simply Sartre's influence that causes Beauvoir in "The Second Sex" to describe the female sex organ as "carnivorous plant," "bog," "suction, humus, pitch and glue . . . insinuating and viscous." Nor is it merely centuries of Catholic repulsion for things of the flesh. The reasons are complex and overdetermined, and I can only suggest some of them. Perhaps because of her anti-psychoanalytical bias, Beauvoir doesn't refer to a major reason for female as well as male disgust at the female body that is now being treated at length by such French women analysts as Julia Kristeva: the fear of being engulfed, swallowed up by the "primitive" mother, that dangerous, powerful, overwhelming figure of our infancy. The fear, of course, is also a wish even less acknowledged.

Beauvoir's relation to her mother was particularly ambivalent. (Her great guilt is revealed in her account of her mother's last days, *A Very Easy Death*.) She loved her for her nurturing, but hated her repression of Simone the child. She was constantly watched, as was Sartre, though he with greater indulgence. For Beauvoir in her early emancipation from her family, when she went off to the university, happiness meant a closed door. Like Sartre, she always wanted another's gaze on her—neither ever escaped the need for a mirror.

The need for others to mirror one's activity in order to give it meaning is a principle of existentialist thought. But Beauvoir and Sartre never connect the roots of this idea to the psychoanalytical account of the mirror stage of development, in which the infant starts responding to the mother's face. What Beauvoir and Sartre refuse to acknowledge is the value of the body. The mind, for them, is paramount. For all her professed atheism, Beauvoir's early Catholic teaching survives. It's simply that in her writings soul has been transformed into mind.

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Yet in examining Sartre and Beauvoir's dualisms, one is struck by the primacy in their metaphors of things and ultimately of bodies. John Donne in the seventeenth century said, "The body makes the mind." In large part, Sartre and Beauvoir's physical experiences influenced their philosophy. In bondage to the mother, it is her body they both reject. Confined by their body in childhood, they seek to escape it through thought. They reject the body in general, but the mother's above all.

The primacy of the physical is something that transcends sex. In the physical deterioration of both Sartre and Beauvoir at the end of their lives, they reveal what Donne also implies: That far more important than sexual difference are the vulnerabilities that all of us share as part of the human condition.

But if sexual difference isn't all-determining for women, there is another category that is—or has been. Though she doesn't use the term, Beauvoir might have said, "Gender is destiny." By *gender*, I mean here what society does with sexual difference. "You girls will never marry. You have no dowries," Beauvoir's father kept saying to his daughters. "You'll have to work for a living." Though proud of her intellect, he viewed Beauvoir's life of hard study as a punishment, necessary because she was doomed to be alone. Sartre's sisterlike mother, in contrast, promised her son that his reward for the same activity would be the adulation of women. No wonder he needed so many of them. In some way he turned Beauvoir into the mother—and the sister. They did not need children. They were so busy shaping themselves—and others.

Their lives seized the imagination of an age, whether as role models for modernism or as unofficial political and intellectual ambassadors in their travels around the world. Seeking utopia in such countries as Russia, Cuba, China, they were repeatedly disillusioned. But however naïve their expectations, they always supported the downtrodden, whether in colonies far away or the working classes at home.

Beauvoir's greatness as a theorist was to show us the anatomy of sexism, to expose with relentless precision the oppression of women in a "masculine world," thereby implying that with equality women could do whatever men could. Despite her talk of autonomy, she does not escape her dependence on the patriarchal order, and never suggests a system to replace it. She made herself a satellite, not because she was a woman, she said, but because of Sartre's philosophical and political superiority.

If the symbolic nature of funerals is any evidence, the public agreed. Sartre's was a huge affair. Thousands upon thousands attended. It was so crowded, people were pushed onto the grave site. In contrast, Beauvoir's was a quiet affair, so quiet, I've been told, that her loyal feminist following was at one point locked outside the cemetery gates. But it may well be that Simone de Beauvoir made the greater contribution. Those who cannot imagine this do not comprehend feminism as a philosophical and political movement. Yet it is—perhaps the greatest of our time. □

Notes

[1] As skeptical as Ruth Herschberger was in this country, in a delightful book called *Adam's Rib* (New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1948).

[2] Recent scientific developments cast ironic light on Beauvoir's idea of reproduction as forced labor. The new reproductive technology with its use of *in vitro* fertilization (fertilization in a petri dish) and surrogate mothers (women who contribute their ova and/or their uterine environment for the creation and gestation of fetuses meant to be reared by others after birth) would seem to offer women greater choice and control over having children. Such technology even points ahead to the possibility of removing reproduction from the body altogether, a prospect that would no doubt have been welcomed by Beauvoir. Not only would reproduction *ex utero* release women from their "enslavement" to the species, it would also modify if not eliminate the entire mythology of women to which Beauvoir is so opposed. (It is primarily because they are biological mothers that women are alternately exalted and degraded.) But while Beauvoir viewed science and technology as potential liberators of women, these new techniques may lead to some new "enslavements," such as the exploitation of poor, minority, and Third-World women for surrogacy. Many feminist scientists today, such as Ruth Hubbard, fear that male-dominated technology will soon deprive women of the right to conceive in the natural way at all. Should reproduction *ex utero* ever become a reality, it would be potentially liberating only in a nonpatriarchal society.

[3] Perhaps *new* is the wrong word since debates about this issue had been going on in the 1920s and 1930s, but certainly Beauvoir is in the vanguard of current thinking on it.

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David Miller & Saul Estrin

A Case for Market Socialism

What Does It Mean? Why Should We Favor It?

We are pleased to print here an essay by two British socialists which appears in a pamphlet issued by the Fabian Society of England. The Fabian pamphlet, tract 516, also contains some criticisms and rebuttals of this article, too long to be printed here. Readers wishing to obtain the pamphlet should write to the Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London, SW1H 9BN, England.—Eds.

The term "market socialism" has no unique reference. It is a blanket term that has emerged to cover all versions of socialism in which markets are given a significant role to play. If there is any community of view among market socialists, it is simply that markets are not automatically to be identified with capitalist markets, and may have a number of properties that all socialists should be willing to find attractive. Since this bare assertion still provokes dissent in some quarters, we will begin by outlining the essential case *for* markets before going on to look at many of the qualifications that have to be entered.

What Is the Market?

IT IS NECESSARY FIRST to dispense with the fiction of "the market" as a single entity. Many separate markets interact with each other, and the operation of each depends on a variety of background conditions; institutional factors such as government regulation and the specification of property rights; empirical factors, like the number of buyers and sellers and the degree of their organization; normative factors, the customs and conventions governing exchanges in that particular area. It is equally wrong to think of "market" and "planning" as diametrically opposed processes. Forms of planning may be as numerous as kinds of markets, and there are many possible ways in which planning decisions can be linked to the operation of markets. By setting the parameters of diverse markets, they can be made to advance various public interests yet still cater to different individual tastes.

A second consideration is the *legitimacy* of markets. A socialist will not see this as a corollary of the property rights of individuals, as some individualists would. Even if certain personal rights are indeed sacrosanct, these will not include the unrestricted right to sell and acquire possessions, a right which is liable to have social consequences of serious concern to socialists. So the case for markets must be made in terms of their general consequences. Here there are broadly speaking three considerations.

- Markets are an efficient way of producing and distributing a very large number of mundane items, from tomatoes to transistor radios. In fact, no complex society dispenses with markets as means to allocate goods to consumers. The variations occur in the extent to which producers face market incentives in deciding what to produce. The familiar Smithian point, that market incentives are a dependable way of getting our bread baked, should be taken seriously. And as Hayek points out, markets allow us collectively to make the best use of the information dispersed throughout a society, though one does not have to elevate this proposition to the status of a universal truth. It just does not make sense for a central planning board to

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make decisions about the relative quantities of salami and garlic sausage that its citizens need; nor would such issues enhance the tone of debate in the democratic assemblies arising in a socialist society. One of the virtues of markets is that, by transferring these decisions to a small group of sausage makers, it clears the decks for more important discussions.

- Markets give their participants a certain kind of freedom. They tend to expand the range of choices that may be made, and they give each person a variety of partners with whom to deal, so that no one is forced to interact with people who cause problems of one kind or another. This is most obviously the case where the items in question have a direct political content. Few socialists can now fail to see the attraction of some kind of market in newspapers, books and so forth, even if they are profoundly skeptical about the existing market structure in this area. However, the point can be broadened: if I am buying for cash, I have no need to explain or justify a request for a large consignment of salami, and this freedom to arrange my personal life in the way that I happen to prefer is one whose value should not be underestimated.
- Markets tend to dissolve personal power. Although they certainly place constraints on people's behavior ("market forces"), they free people from dependence on particular individuals such as petty bureaucrats. This is not because markets have a directly ennobling effect on human nature, but because obstructive individuals can be circumvented, and because competitive pressures tend in the long run to favor the survival of the helpful.

None of this is intended as a blanket endorsement of market mechanisms. It is meant to show that, where markets can be expected to work effectively, there are good reasons for allowing them to operate. Socialists ought not to despise efficiency and freedom of choice, and they ought to be fully aware of the defects of officialdom. At the same time, they ought to be alive to the wide variety of circumstances affecting the operation of markets.

In some areas, markets will not work at all, for example where the product is such that two or more competitors cannot remain in equilibrium, and one productive unit tends to establish a dominant position from which it cannot then be dislodged by new entrants. Such cases may be comparatively rare. Far more common are markets in which competition benefits those immediately involved in it but has adverse consequences for a wider constituency or broader social interests. The concepts of externalities and public goods currently underpin a large amount of state activity aimed either at regulating markets to prevent damaging side effects or at providing goods and services that private individuals have inadequate incentive to produce. The state will continue to play such a role under market socialism, as indeed it must under all forms of socialism.

From a socialist point of view, however, externalities and public goods have a deeper significance. Socialists are concerned not only with economically calculable losses, but also with effects on the general quality of life in a society. We will want to ask, for example, about the effect that particular markets have on local communities: do they create incentives that will lead, as a byproduct, to the breakup of living patterns that are valued by those who participate in them? We will also want to look at the distributive results of various markets in terms of ideals of fairness and equality. If the results of those inquiries reveal market failures in the broader sense, we will begin to search for ways either of replacing the market entirely or of intervening to correct undesirable tendencies.

Capital and Labor

DRAWING THE BOUNDARIES between market and nonmarket provision is therefore a matter for empirical investigation, and the boundaries themselves may be expected to shift over time. There is, however, one general point that market socialists need to insist upon in their response to neoliberalism. This is that markets in *capital* and *labor* are very different in their implications from markets in most *products*.

The neoliberal case looks most convincing when applied to markets in ordinary consumer goods. In these cases consumer sovereignty can

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normally be expected to work effectively, and socially damaging side effects will only occur in special cases. The neoliberal strategy is to try to assimilate all markets to these intuitively appealing cases. However, capital and labor both have special features that make the assimilation highly problematic. Take capital first, and consider decisions to invest in this or that productive enterprise. Such decisions are of their nature harder to make than (typical) decisions about consumer goods; to be rational they need to be based on complex judgments about the future performance of enterprises. Thus there is a powerful tendency for these decisions to gravitate in practice into the hands of experts who are able to spend time acquiring the necessary information, and so control of capital passes effectively into the hands of a small elite.

Furthermore, the social repercussions of investment decisions are likely to be substantial. Whereas my decision to buy salami rather than garlic sausage has at most a marginal effect on anyone else's life, a decision to build or not build a factory in a particular location may have enormous consequences for the local community, and for a future generation. The shape of the capital stock accumulated in one period creates the world in which succeeding generations have to make their way; investment in housing is an obvious example here. An elite makes the decisions which significantly affect a large number of lives; which is to say that it exercises *power*. It does not follow immediately, of course, that capital markets should be abolished. There is still a choice to be made between diffusing power as far as possible through competition, and regulating it through public authority. But it is misleading to pretend that capital poses no special problems for the theory of markets.

LABOR POSES PROBLEMS of a different kind. To begin with, it is usually impossible for workers to spread their labor among a number of alternatives, as if they were mere commodities. That is, a worker acquires a particular skill and works fulltime for a single employer, not many different firms. This makes workers highly vulnerable; if their decision turns out to be mistaken (the firm lays off employees or goes bankrupt) the costs are very large indeed. Thus there is a strong *prima facie* case for special protection that does not hold in ordinary market contracts where *caveat emptor* is the rule.

Second, the worker in supplying labor also hands over a large segment of his or her *life* to the employer. This will to some extent be reflected in the operation of labor markets, where working conditions as well as pay can be expected to affect the choice of work, but it is unreasonable to expect all the consequences of labor to be taken into account in this way. There may be, for instance, long-term health implications whose seriousness is hard to judge. More controversially, the environment in which people work may affect their personalities and future preferences. Occupying a subordinate role at work lessens the ability to participate effectively in political arenas, for instance. A socialist, having a general view about the shape of the society she or he would like brought into existence, cannot remain indifferent to such effects even if the individuals in question do not actively resist them. This raises questions about the extent to which socialists should regard people's present preferences as having canonical status in decisions about the allocations of goods and services. Nevertheless, it is clear that capital and labor must be treated differently from ordinary consumer goods. In broad outline, market socialists want to have a free market in products, and either no market at all, or a well-regulated market, in labor and capital. This position is less absurd than those standing both to the left and to the right would like to make it seem.

The Structures of Enterprises

IF PRODUCT MARKETS ARE TO BE RETAINED under socialism, but capital and labor markets abolished or at least transformed, what ought the structure of enterprises to be? At the libertarian end of the spectrum, socialism implies no more than equal entitlement to the means of production, with the question of how people choose to use their endowments (whether in capitalist enterprises, cooperatives, etc.) left entirely open. Second, there is the Croslandite view that capitalist firms are an acceptable component in socialism (perhaps alongside

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other components) provided that the state uses its powers of taxation and regulation to correct income deficiencies and so forth. Third, the respective rights of capital and labor in the enterprise should be redefined in the form of a capital-labor partnership, with each party being allocated a predetermined share of profit. Forth, enterprises in market socialism should normally take the form of workers' cooperatives, with capital supplied externally and entitled only to receive interest. Since the fourth view is at first glance the most congenial from a socialist point of view, we will begin by examining its strengths and weaknesses.

The attractions of workers' self-management are easy to see. Power is spread throughout the enterprise, with each member formally having equal voting rights, and a chance to share in managerial functions (e.g., through a rotating committee system). The organization of work (hours, conditions, etc.) can be altered to suit members' preferences. Since each member has a stake in the profit of the enterprise, there are likely to be substantial gains in productive efficiency. Finally, the distribution of income, although it must to some extent reflect the market position of those with special skills, is likely to be considerably more egalitarian than in the alternative forms of enterprise canvassed above. On the other hand, there is now abundant literature, both theoretical and empirical, on the functioning of cooperatives, suggesting some significant limits on the potential scope of a self-managed sector.

The economic analysis shows above all that producer cooperatives react sluggishly to changes in market conditions. The capitalist system is highly responsive to changes in market conditions from both the cost and demand side, whereas cooperatives are interested in the collective welfare of their members, which will include their pay, conditions, hours of work, and size of the group with whom they are employed. Improved market conditions permit cooperatives to gratify more fully their collective goals, but to the extent that these conflict with increased production, the effect on output will be dampened relative to that of capitalist firms.

Many analysts have seen this as a source of unemployment under market socialism, but cooperatives are unlikely to fire members in order to increase collective welfare. It is an appropriate macro-economic policy on the demand side that is needed for full employment, matched if necessary by government creation of the additional cooperatives required to mop up surplus labor. The moral is surely that the cooperative form may be inappropriate if we want to exploit social opportunities in sectors with rapidly changing demand, technological or cost conditions. In good times, cooperatives will not adapt sufficiently to high demand or technological changes. In bad times, cooperatives are ill-suited to the hard decisions involved in fundamental capital and labor restructuring. If the economy is open, domestic cooperatives will be squeezed out of foreign and home markets by more flexible international competitors. If the economy is closed, the welfare burden will fall on domestic consumers.

Investment

THIS BRINGS US TO THE SECOND ISSUE: investment. Left to themselves, cooperatives tend to invest less than capitalist firms in the same situation would have done. There is likely to be a bias within conventional capital markets against the cooperative mode of production which leads to restrictions on the provision of external funds. This could be eliminated by the creation of a cooperative bank to act both as a source of saving and a broader supporting institution for the self-managed sector along the lines proposed by Vanek and to some extent undertaken by the Caja Laboral Popular for the Mondragon group of cooperatives.[1]

But there could still be problems for investment on the demand side. If we accept that cooperative entrepreneurs will be relatively more risk-averse than their capitalist counterparts, they will require a risk premium from projects over and above the market rate of return that would choke off the volume of investment undertaken. Moreover, all the discursive evidence suggests that cooperatives are unhappy about accepting "excessive" external financing because of the consequential loss of control over the future of the firm. One can view this as placing a limit on investment

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demand at a quantity multiplied up from internal financial sources by a ratio which the membership determines to be consistent with retaining control over the destiny of the cooperative.

For some or all of these reasons, cooperatives are prone to invest at a lower rate than their capitalist counterparts. This strongly suggests that cooperatives are also inappropriate for the production of goods that require capital-intensive techniques. Unless some solution to the under-investment problem is found, for example via the central direction of fixed capital accumulation through cooperative banks, this seems to rule out self-management for the heavy industrial sectors—steel, chemicals, metal-working—sometimes referred to as the "commanding heights."

Other reasons argue against a significant role for self-management in highly capital-intensive large-scale plants or indeed any sectors with major economies of scale in production. Self-management is not impossible in large, multi-plant diversified corporations—the Yugoslavs approach the problem by breaking the firm up into a loose coalition of self-managing subunits—but the costs of democratic management rise while the benefits for the work force diminish. Cooperatives in such sectors could actually lead to significant welfare losses, since the collective membership might choose to sacrifice economies of scale for retaining relatively small size and effective work force control over the firm. This is another example of potential conflict between the interests of the cooperative members and those of the consumer, who gains from the lower prices arising from the larger scale of production.

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Skills

RELATED TO SIZE IS THE NATURE OF SKILLS required in the production process. Self-management involves the democratic control of the firm by its labor force and its success will hinge on the relevance and capacity of the entrepreneurial group's innate skills. Cooperatives will be most effective where the labor force as a whole, rather than some tiny proportion, has significant contributions to make on the managerial side and least where it does not. This does not augur well for self-management in sectors in which the production process itself is relatively mechanical and enterprise success instead hinges on the highly specific talents of a small group of workers: in design, in finance, in marketing, or in foreign sales. When combined with the probable limitations by cooperatives of their size, which will restrict the spreading of risks through diversification, this criterion rules out sectors such as banking, finance, and insurance.

THE COOPERATIVE FORM may also be inappropriate in high-risk industries and industries subject to rapid technological change. It is more likely to succeed in areas with relatively small-scale production processes that rely disproportionately on the skills of the entire labor force (rather than on capital or the talents of a small subgroup), and in relatively well-established markets and product lines.

Capital-labor partnerships may be a way of combining the benefits of self-management with some of the economic advantages of the orthodox capitalist firm. These operate on the basis of an agreed division of rights and responsibilities between the two sides, and a corresponding division of profits. Since capital is now a risk-bearing factor, there is room for a more conventional capital market; and the need to compete in such a market for continuing investment obliges the labor force in each enterprise to pursue overall profit (rather than profit per worker) as its goal. Partnerships of this kind will be more inclined to expand em-

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ployment in the face of market opportunities since employment levels will be decided by the representatives of capital.

Difficulties

THERE ARE, HOWEVER, at least two difficulties with the partnership idea. One is that it reintroduces the possibility of conflict between one party whose interests are solely in levels of profit and a second party whose interests are more diverse. To avoid this kind of conflict, the partnership agreement may need to be quite detailed (otherwise potential investors will be deterred). But self-management is not *merely* a matter of giving workers an economic stake in their enterprise, desirable though that may be from the point of view of performance. It is also a matter of encouraging active decision-making in an area of daily life that is centrally important to most people. Clearly such participation only makes sense where there are real decisions to be made.

A second difficulty is that the effects of the partnership system on the distribution of income may in the long term be less desirable than those of the cooperative system. As people invest in more or less successful partnerships, any initial equality in the distribution of investment capital is likely to give way to a cumulative advantage for the shrewd investors. Why should this matter? Socialists are likely to believe that income equalities above a certain point, however they are generated, are socially damaging, and that skill at investment, though certainly a socially useful talent, is not the kind of skill that should command very large rewards.

IN GENERAL TERMS, a feasible socialist market economy would have to be institutionally pluralistic. There would be a large cooperative sector, perhaps a sector in which capital-labor partnerships were formed, perhaps a sector of very small enterprises (restaurants and so forth) taking a conventional capitalist form. It seems overwhelmingly likely that basic industries requiring massive levels of investment (oil, coal, steel) would be state managed, even though subject to (mainly international) market competition. Such diversity would be a realistic reflection of the varied types of production that exist in a modern economy. Such pluralism would have to be cultivated as a matter of policy, and supported by the appropriate regulatory and investment agencies. Thus the confluence of plan and market, referred to at the beginning, would reappear here as a deliberate structuring of the institutions of the market.

Yet we do not envisage the market sector in a socialist society as being all-embracing. Clearly there will still be a place for industries that are run as public services under government control—the railways, for example. Lack of direct competition and the potential social costs of a market-based service together provide a strong reason for taking these services out of the market sector. Different reasons support the same conclusion in the case of several of the welfare services. It should therefore be apparent that government continues to have a major policy role in our version of market socialism. In some areas its role will be direct, in the sense that an arm of government will administer services directly; in other areas its role will be a supervisory one—structuring and then regulating the working of a market. Market socialism is therefore not about "rolling back the state" in a blanket sense, though it is possible that in some particular areas market socialists would wish to see the role of the state diminished. It is rather about using the power of government intelligently, to carry out those tasks which the state alone can perform.

From a certain point of view, the picture we have painted is anti-utopian and may not seem to differ much from the mixed economy favored by social democrats (of whatever party). Why, then, should it be considered as a significant socialist advance? The major gains lie in three areas. First, it promises a much greater involvement for ordinary people in the running of their enterprises. Second, as a result the distribution of income is likely to be very considerably more egalitarian than under the modified version of capitalism that we enjoy at present. Third, our proposals would amount to a socialization of capital, and thus to bringing under popular control a major source of power in the present system. We have not taken a dogmatic line on the extent to which this means

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placing capital under public control (say through a publicly managed investment bank) or on the other hand dispersing capital ownership far more widely in the form of individual holdings. In either case (or with a mixed system), large concentrations of capital in private hands are broken up, and power is diffused.

Criticisms

SHOWING THAT A FEASIBLE INSTITUTIONAL structure can be devised for the economy is, however, not the only task facing market socialists. They must also show that their proposals can be reconciled with the core ideals of socialism itself. In the first part of the chapter we outlined arguments *for* markets that we thought socialists should take to heart; and at the same time indicated where the socialist view on these questions would differ from the neoliberal view. But we have not yet attempted to respond to some basic criticisms that may be launched against our proposals from what might be called the "fundamentalist" position.

These criticisms come in various shapes and forms, revealing three major strands in the antimarket case.

- The argument for markets falsely assumes that consumers are sovereign. In fact, the desires that markets respond to are very largely created by the market itself, and they are in that sense inauthentic. The object of production should rather be to meet human *needs*.
- The market distributes goods and services in a way that is, from a socialist point of view, inappropriate. It rewards merit and luck rather than need.
- The market breeds competition and destroys community. It encourages people to think of themselves as isolated individuals and to neglect the ties that bind them together. The economic incentives it provides tend to break down communal relationships.

All of these arguments have force; but they tell far more strongly against libertarian visions of an all-encompassing market economy than against the circumscribed use of market mechanisms that we have been proposing. We have stressed throughout that, for socialists, markets must be offset by government planning, and also by a public sector in which services are provided on a nonmarket basis. A mixed system of this type can be defended against the challenges listed above.

Consumer sovereignty. It is certainly true that many consumer demands are stimulated by producers who have an interest in satisfying them, but it is not clear why this should give grounds for objection. Most of our desires are in any case socially produced, as Marx himself was eager to point out. Why should this origin be worse than any other? There seem in fact to be only two broad instances in which the case for consumer sovereignty breaks down:

(a) What the consumer is aiming at is beneficial to her or him, but she or he lacks the expertise to make an intelligent judgment about how to obtain it.
(b) What the consumer is aiming at is, in fact, detrimental to his or her own best interests.

We should be wary of making too much of case (a). There will be many instances where consumers indeed make erroneous choices, but these choices are self-correcting in the sense that, next time around, a better decision will be made. The exceptions are cases in which a particular choice is unrepeatable and/or the costs of making a bad decision are very high. Both features are often present in the case of medical treatment, for example, and are good reasons for disallowing a free market in medical services. Patients should be protected at least by a state licensing system and possibly by state funding of doctors.

This does, of course, have a paternalist ring to it, and socialists may differ in the extent to which they wish to see people safeguarded against making harmful market choices. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that, first, people may positively welcome such safeguards as ways of avoiding onerous decisions: second, a community that recognizes a responsibility for the welfare of its members cannot remain indifferent if they embark on courses of action whose effects eventually drain the community's resources (e.g. if the victims of irresponsible private medical treatment have later to be looked after at the community's expense).

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Case (b) takes us into more debatable territory. Some socialists would want to deploy a strong theory of human needs, in terms of which felt desires are to be critically assessed. We would, on the contrary, endorse the presumption that the individual is the best judge of his or her own interests unless there are special factors present that make this implausible. The clearest cases will be those in which choices when acted upon change the agent's preferences in a way that is, on balance, undesirable in the light of his or her overall system of desires. A familiar example is addiction, where exposure to a substance or experience has the effect that the person comes to need increasingly large doses to maintain a minimum level of satisfaction; with limited resources, she or he is less able to pursue other plans and projects. Other examples can be cited. The onus, however, is on the critic of market provision to show that one or another of these factors is liable to be present in the case of a particular good and service; one cannot built a general argument against the market on the basis of a series of special cases.

Distributive justice. We assume that the idea of distribution according to need will feature prominently in the thinking of almost all socialists. Two questions then immediately arise. First, are needs to be defined so extensively that all resources will have to be allocated on this basis? Second, does distribution according to need imply the abandonment of markets, or might the principle be met by retaining markets but redistributing purchasing power, say through the tax system? On most understandings of "need," the answer to the first question is "No." Needs cannot be defined in an ahistorical, quasibiological way; on the contrary, they are socially defined, on the basis of standards of living that are regarded as "normal" in a particular context. It does not follow that needs, so defined, are infinitely expandable. It is quite feasible to think of a division of social resources between those earmarked to satisfy needs and those serving to reward merit, and to provide the incentives that are required to make a market sector function effectively.

The second question is less easy to answer. Where needs are largely similar, or where differences in need can easily be estimated by simple observation, it may be possible to respond to them by cash transfers. Where, on the other hand, the extent of need cannot be accurately judged in advance of the treatment that meets it, the only effective policy will be provision in kind. Since some needs are always likely to fall into the latter category, there will be a good case for non-market provision in these instances. Compare, for example, the need for food with the need for medical treatment. So on this ground, too, the market socialist ought to concede that the scope of the market should be circumscribed. On the other side, there is no case for a general veto on market mechanisms.

Community. For a community to exist, two conditions appear to be necessary. First, the members must regard themselves as belonging to such a community. Second, this shared attitude must be expressed in the way that people behave to one another, including here the institutions that they establish to govern their formal relationships, as well as aspects like solidarity and mutual aid among equals. The internal and external conditions seem naturally to reinforce one another: that is, a communal identity encourages people to practice and support institutions of mutual aid, while on the other hand the practice itself tends to strengthen that identity. Nonetheless, it is clearly impossible to create a community *ex nihilo* simply by institutional change, and to that extent all socialists must recognize the practical limits of their proposals in this area.

Constraints on the market can be seen as contributing to the realization of this communitarian ideal. Protecting people against making damaging choices as consumers and providing for needs outside of market mechanisms can both be regarded as manifestations of a caring society. Assuming that these policies are popularly supported, people are giving up some fraction of their income to protect the vulnerable. There is of course an element of insurance as well, in the sense that each person is a potential beneficiary at some point in his or her life, but the idea of mutual aid does not exclude this possibility.

SOME QUESTIONS REMAIN. Are these communitarian elements strong enough to offset the individualism that appears to be inherent in

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market relationships? Won't the effect of market competition be to break down communal ties and set people against one another? Can this be avoided without a complete transcendence of markets?

This issue cannot be definitely resolved here, but it is relevant that people seem able to stand in multiple relationships to one another depending on the various roles that they occupy from time to time. For instance, two people might be, simultaneously, friends, competitors on the tennis court, political allies, and rivals in the marketplace. Provided that they can keep those roles distinct—that is, they have ways of preventing their economic interests from intruding on their political aims, and so forth—there seems no reason why such a complex relationship should not be stable. Contrary to the view that economic markets once established necessarily pervade all aspects of existence, it is possible to point to many areas of life, even under capitalism, from which economic considerations are successfully barred. Socialists should look for ways of strengthening these areas; in particular, political participation should become a more significant aspect of life under socialism, and a major counterbalance to the economic sphere.

There is, however, a tradition of socialist thought that emphasizes the *simplicity* and *transparency* of social relations under socialism, and from this point of view the idea of role-playing, with its suggestion of artifice, may seem alien. Such a view is most eloquently expressed in William Morris's utopian fable *News From Nowhere*.[2] His vision of human fulfillment has its charms, but it is by no means self-evidently true. Here people seem one-dimensional just because of their simplicity. Missing is the creative tension that most actual people experience between the need for self-assertion and the moral demands of their community. Clearly the tendency of capitalism (and of unrestricted market relations in general) is to foster self-assertion at the expense of social loyalties. On the other hand, people in the Marx/Morris view of things seem oversocialized to the point at which their individuality is in danger of disappearing altogether. Perhaps, then, the idea of role-playing, and of coping with the dilemmas that arise when role requirements appear to conflict, will seem on reflection to be integral to our idea of a developed human being.

The remarks in the last paragraph fall far short of a properly worked-out philosophical basis for market socialism. They are meant to suggest only that it may be possible to find a principled grounding for the institutionally pluralistic system that we sketched earlier. Market socialism as we understand it combines market and nonmarket elements in a way that allows for the expression both of individual desires and of communal loyalties. Communitarian ideals find their practical expression in the shaping of markets to meet social objectives and in social policies which aim to satisfy a range of needs. The sense of community would be fostered through participation at work, and through nonmarket forms of association, especially political assemblies. It is not clear that a stronger form of community than this implies would be desirable. Ultimately socialists must decide how far their communitarian commitments can be taken, in view of their equally strong commitments to individuality and freedom. □

Notes

[1] See J. Vanek, ed., *Self-Management: Economic Liberation of Man* (London: Penguin, 1975).

[2] William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970).

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Mitchell Cohen

Portrait of the Young Lukács

Georg Lukács liked to say that Marxism is the Himalayas of thought. But, he warned, a hare atop the Himalayas ought not to imagine himself taller than an elephant in the valley below.

The most fertile Marxist mind of our times was surely that of Lukács, and it was a mind that matured beside many of the elephants that roamed Central European intellectual valleys in the early twentieth century. Its most brilliant product remains his 1923 classic *History and Class Consciousness*. At a time when Marxist philosophy was becoming increasingly crude, Lukács forcefully returned the categories of classical German thought to it, provoking (predictably) the ire of both Social Democrats and Bolsheviks.

The sources of Lukács's philosophical fecundity can be discerned in 161 of his letters that have now been translated, and which span his early journey from aesthetic to ethical and political preoccupations.* Most of them come from a now famous briefcase found in a Heidelberg bank vault a year after his 1971 death in Budapest. It had been unopened since November 7, 1917—a year before he became a Marxist at the relatively late age of 33—and Lukács apparently told nobody about it. Inside were an array of manuscripts and some 1,600 letters to and from a virtual Who's Who of the Central European intelligentsia: Max Weber, Thomas Mann, Karl Mannheim, Georg Simmel, Martin Buber, Karl Polanyi, Ernst Troeltsch, and Karl Jaspers, to list but a few. There were also letters to Irma Seidler and Leo Popper, respectively the great love and closest friend of Lukács's youth.

Many of these letters have been utilized already in the recent outpouring of Lukács scholarship.[1] Read alone they are difficult to appreciate by anyone not initiated into the German and Hungarian intellectual milieus of the first decades of this century; when contextualized and examined (as they must be) with Lukács's writings, a remarkable portrait of the evolution of a radical thinker emerges. One sees his personal and intellectual development from the Kantian *cum* existential posture of his first volume of essays, *Soul and Form* (1910-11), through his unfinished "Heidelberg Aesthetics," to the more Fichtean and Hegelian *Theory of the Novel* (1914-15), and finally his conversion to bolshevism in 1918.

The Hungary of Lukács's youth was marked by rising reaction and anti-Semitism; he was alienated from home and country. Born into a middle-class Jewish family in 1885, he had poor relations with his mother; his father, a prominent Budapest banker who loved him dearly ("I will make every sacrifice necessary so that you can become a great man, recognized and famous," reads a letter from József von Lukács), seems to have had little comprehension of what truly moved his son. Both German and Hungarian were spoken in the Lukács house, and guests included the likes of Béla Bartók, Thomas Mann, and Max Weber. Young "Gyuri" gravitated to German culture.

The young Lukács must be understood within the context of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century romantic anticapitalist *Weltanschauung* of Central European intellectual circles, which contrasted *Gemeinschaft* (community), an idealized world of organic Germanic *Kultur*, with advancing "Anglo-French" *Gesellschaft* (society) with its mechanistic and utilitarian *Zivilisation*. True values, it was believed, were dissolving—perhaps irrevocably—before the march of a spiritless and misconceived "progress." In *Soul and Form* Lukács's problem was that he saw an irreconcilable dualism between the realm of ultimate values ("Life") and the inauthentic empirical world ("life"). Platonic and Kantian motifs structured these assertions. Plato postulated two worlds, a permanent and real one of forms (or "ideas") accessible to our reason, and an endlessly fluctuating empirical realm accessible to our senses. For Kant *a priori* categories and intuitions of the mind structure our knowledge of the world. In a 1909

*Georg Lukács, *Selected Correspondence 1902-1920*, edited, translated, and annotated by Judith Marcus and Zoltán Tar with an introduction by Zoltán Tar (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). 318 pp. $25.

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letter to Popper, Lukács asserted that his aesthetics were based on "the assumption that all genuine and profound need for expression finds its own typical way—its scheme if you will—which is the form." Forms were posited by Lukács as meaningful, atemporal structures through which human beings express their—forever unfulfilled—possibilities in the face of everyday, inauthentic "life." The "foundering of form against life" thus results in a tragic vision of the world.

In a later essay on Dostoevsky, Lukács insisted that it is the manner of posing a problem that is crucial. It was the problem of "culture" that linked Lukács's intellectual and personal life. In *Soul and Form* Lukács argued that while the essayist (or "the critic") is generally assumed to be facilitating our understanding of a poem or painting, he in fact speaks "about the ultimate problems of life, but in a tone which implies that he is only discussing pictures and books. . . ." Thus every great essayist writes with irony since he is preoccupied at once with the accidental (the work addressed) and the necessary (those ultimate questions). Plato gave "form to the myth of Socrates," using his mentor's destiny as the "vehicle for the questions he . . . wanted to address to life about destiny."

Lukács utilized a distinction between the creative artist (the "poet") and the critic (the "Platonist") and (sounding more like Schiller than Kant) he proposed that each represents a "type of soul" which expresses itself in its appropriate form: the poet through verse, the Platonist in prose. The poet speaks of himself and is never "problematic." In contrast, the Platonist ("the critic") never dares to "think aloud about himself," and since he "can only experience life through the work of others . . . ," he always fails to "capture life." One notes that in a 1909 letter discussing these themes, Lukács refers—proudly—to "my problematic existence."

Lukács saw himself as a critic and told Irma Seidler that he wrote essays because he could not write verse. He at once wrestled with the fate and nature of literary categories and with his own fate and nature. As his letters vividly testify, he believed that normal life and happiness would of necessity destroy his work. When his relation with Irma collapsed, Lukács contemplated taking his life, and a never-sent suicide note to her written in November 1908 speaks of his "total exclusion from all human community." "You wanted to redeem me . . . but I cannot be saved." To Popper he confided, "I am convinced that the source of my [intellectual] riches is my being what I am. One pays for everything; I pay by 'sacrificing' life." Irma, the great love of this "Platonist," threatened his sacrifice. Echoing Nietzsche, he told Popper in a December 1910 letter that "Once I was *unglücklich* [unhappy]; now I am *jenseits von Glück and Unglück* [beyond happiness and unhappiness]. I am on my way toward my center and I am convinced that nobody will be there to share the experience with me . . . " When Irma, following a failed marriage to a painter and an affair with one of Lukács's friends, jumped to her death in the Danube in 1911, a self-excoriating Lukács decreed that "loneliness, which I so desired, is upon me like a life sentence. If anyone could have saved her it was I. . . . " But then he told Popper not to worry, for "in a few days I'll be able to start working, and that is the only thing remaining for me and will forever be in the future."

If Irma could not be his "salvation" while alive, could his work be, now that she was dead? And could art, perhaps, bring redemption to him—or to anyone else? This too Lukács rejected and here we can see the parallel between his personal and philosophical evolution. In a 1909 letter he wrote:

> Any accomplishments fall from the tree of my life as so much overripe fruit, leaving the barren branches brooding in the autumn wind. . . . My life possesses nothing but these fruits. I have only accomplishments, and I am aware that they alone can make me human; but how can they do that when they cease to be mine the minute they are born? My soul yearns for them but remains untouched by the possibilities. They have no connection with my life and provide neither form nor content for it.

We find this in theoretical formulation in his unfinished Heidelberg "Philosophy of Art" (1912-14) where he discussed "the superpersonal tragedy" of artists "which follows from the essence of art":

> They themselves remain unredeemed . . . all the perfection with which they endow their works . . . which flows out of them into the work, is futile for them; . . . they remain more silent, less outspoken than those men of everyday life. . . . [Their] works become the highest, the most purely human works attainable, it is true, but . . . they themselves are the least blessed, the least redeemed of men of all. Browning's Andrea del Sarto says "My works are nearer to heaven, but I sit here."

In other words, a tragic vision remains the structuring motif: for the Lukács of 1909 or the poet he writes of shortly before the Great War. Salvation is neither in everyday life, nor in creating art. For while the latter takes on its own life and may posit a realm of wholeness and perfection in contrast to the empirical world, artistic utopia is illusion.

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Could there be a real realm? As early as 1908 a schoolmate wrote of Lukács's "rapid conversion to socialism." As yet this was the vague socialism of a radically alienated critic influenced by the Hungarian syndicalist theoretician Ervin Szabó and the poetry of Endre Ady. The Marx he knew was filtered through Georg Simmel, with whom he studied in Berlin in 1909-10. Although Lukács appreciated Marx, he rejected the materialism he associated with Marxism. As Lukács's student György Markus has argued, the young Lukács was in fact pluralistic in his modes of analysis, at times metaphysical/existential, as in *Soul and Form*, and at times historically and sociologically oriented. His *History of the Evolution of Modern Drama* focused on its subject as "the drama of the bourgeoisie," the drama of a fragmented society contrasted with the organic one of the Greek polis. Lukács's issue was whether his age was, in Markus's words, "an expression of the existential and ontological tragedy of culture or of an historical crisis from which recovery was possible."[2] How this played out for him is the key to Lukács's development, a development mediated by his sojourn in Heidelberg, by the Great War, and, importantly, by Fyodor Dostoevsky.

In his diaries, the poet Béla Bálazs wrote of his friend Georg Lukács in 1914: "Gyuri's great new philosophy. Messianism. The homogenous world as the goal of salvation. Art is Lucifer's 'making things better.' Seeing the world as homogenous before the process of becoming so." And another of Lukács's friends, the Heidelberg Neo-Kantian Emil Lask, is reported to have mused, "What are the names of the four Evangelists? Matthew, Mark, Lukács and Bloch." Lukács hoped to "habilitate" in Heidelberg, that is, write the post doctoral work required by German universities of young scholars to secure an academic post, and he and his spiritual comrade Ernst Bloch were renowned there for their eschatological and Dostoevskian concerns. In Bloch, Lukács later reminisced, he encountered someone "who could do philosophy as if the whole of modern philosophy did not exist, and who showed that it was possible to do philosophy like Aristotle or Hegel."

This orientation went against all the anti-metaphysical biases then current in German thought. After Hegel's death in 1831, speculative philosophy had come into increasing disrepute, especially with the enormous strides made by the natural sciences; Neo-Kantianism emerged in the late 19th century as an attempt to rehabilitate—and delimit—philosophy in light of that progress. The Heidelberg Lukács came to was the seat of one of the major Neo-Kantian schools in the persons of Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert, and Lask. It was the home of Max Weber as well, and Lukács quickly became a member of his circle. Indeed, Weber emerged as his great advocate: "*I want you to become one of my colleagues as much as I want anything*," the great sociologist wrote to him. There is much irony in the fact that Lukács, holder of two doctorates and championed by no less than Weber, failed to secure a university career. The reasons for his failure included his "foreignness" (particularly his Jewish origins), resistance by narrow pedants, and the impression that he was an "essayist" and not a "systematic" philosopher.

Lukács aspired to "habilitate" with a work on aesthetics, and later recounted that it was the formulation of his questions that intrigued Weber. Whereas Kant focused on aesthetic judgment, Lukács declared: "Works of art exist. How are they possible?" He continued to wrestle with a theme we have already noted—the positing by art of a utopian wholeness which, as art, remained an illusory embodiment of redemption. The question remained: Where was redemption to be found? His inability to provide an answer took on added urgency as the world war engulfed Europe.

Lukács took a radical antiwar position and turned from aesthetics to ethics by planning to write on Dostoevsky. "The book will go beyond Dostoevsky . . ." we read in a March 1915 letter, "it will contain my metaphysical ethics and a significant part of my philosophy of history. . . ." Lukács only completed an introduction, which eventually appeared as his *Theory of the Novel*. In a 1962 preface to its republication he reconstructed his mood at the time: he had had no objections if the war resulted in the collapse of the Romanovs, Hohenzollerns, and the Hapsburgs. But once this happened, his question was, "Who was to save us from Western civilization?" He sought an answer, it seems, in the spirit of Dostoevsky.

Dostoevsky had cast an imposing shadow over the Central European intelligentsia for some time. Mann's romantic anticapitalist tome *Reflections of a Non-Political Man* used him as a starting point; Weber was keenly interested in the Russian novelist, as was the poet Ady; the young Karl Mannheim, as we learn from one of his letters to Lukács, was planning a book on Dostoevsky; Stefan Zweig and Freud later wrote on him. *The Theory of the Novel* is dedicated to Yelena Grabenko, the Russian former Social Revolutionary (and unsuccess-

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ful artist) Lukács wed in 1914. She was described by Bálazs as someone who virtually had stepped out of a Dostoevsky novel. According to Bloch, during the 1905 revolution Grabenko borrowed a baby in order to hide dynamite beneath its blankets. "Through her," he commented, "Lukács married Dostoevsky, so to speak. . . ."

IN FACT DOSTOEVSKY does not appear until the very end of *The Theory of the Novel*. The book begins by linking the forms of epic literature to the civilizations that produced them. Every art form, Lukács wrote, is "defined by the metaphysical dissonance of life which it accepts and organizes as the basis of a totality complete in itself. . . ." Lukács now historicized his formerly atemporal aesthetic categories; instead of declaring "the gods of reality, of history" to be "obstinant and rash" as he had in *Soul and Form*, he discussed the novel as the epic form of fragmented contemporary society, one in which the individual is "problematic" and "transcendentally homeless." This he contrasted with the "integrated civilization" of ancient Greece in which the "hero" is at home in an "organic—and therefore intrinsically meaningful—concrete totality."

That Lukács envisioned this dichotomy not only in literary but in the most pressing of immediate terms is evident from his response to Weber's proposal that the opening half of his essay—which Weber warned was "almost unintelligible to anyone but those who *know you* intimately"—be cut for the sake of publication; Lukács refused because "be it only by way of suggestion" the material was "indispensable for the historico-philosophical comprehension of present-day reality. . . ." In fact, Lukács now placed his own concerns as a "problematic individual" in a historically embedded context.

To characterize that context, he called the novel, using Fichte's phrase, the epic of "the epoch of absolute sinfulness." It was an "adventure of interiority" and "the story of the soul that goes to find itself, that seeks adventures in order to be proved and tested by them. . . ." The problematic individual has no recourse but to "interiority" because the "is"—the empirical world—is opposed to the "ought"—how it should be. Consequently, Lukács proposed that "whether inner reality is superior to outer reality or vice versa" is "the ethical problem of utopia," that is, whether "the ability to imagine a better world can be ethically justified and . . . whether this ability can serve as the starting point for a life that is rounded in itself. . . ." But he insisted on the inadequacy of creating utopia "by purely artistic means. . . ."

In *The Theory of the Novel* Lukács developed themes that were later given Marxist formulation in *History and Class Consciousness*. In the fragmented modern world conventions appear to human beings as a "second nature" beyond them, "a charnel house of long-dead interiorities. . . ." But "When the structures made by man for man are really adequate to man, they are his necessary and native home. . . ." The Marxist Lukács will later transform this into the idea of reification by arguing that *in the capitalist world of the market one form, the commodity-form, becomes dominant*. Through that form relations among human beings appear to take on "the character of a thing" and acquire "a 'phantom objectivity,' an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people." For this Lukács, the issue is the creation, by means of the revolutionary proletariat's historical action, of a world in which structures made by humans are adequate to them. In *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács did not yet posit world-historical action by the universal class; in its final pages he only detected "intimations" of "a new epoch," expressed abstractly by Tolstoy but portentously by Dostoevsky. He asked: was the latter already "the Homer" or merely the harbinger of a new world to be born?

Dostoevsky was preoccupied with suffering, faith, salvation, and guilt; with means and ends; with a Grand Inquisitor's contraposing earthly bread and human freedom; with a Raskolnikov's justification for killing the pawnbroker. What Lukács sought in Dostoevsky was a condemnation of the epoch of absolute sinfulness on the one hand, and a secularized religious projection of its opposite, a communion (or community) of souls, on the other. It was to ethics, not politics, that Lukács gave priority, as he makes evident in revealing exchanges with Paul Ernst in the spring of 1915: "The problem is to find the pathways leading from soul to soul. Everything else has an instrumental quality and serves as means to that end." He asks to be sent a novel by the Russian Social Revolutionary and assassin "Ropshin" (Boris Sakinov), who, Lukács says, is of great importance "re: psychology of Russian terrorism, about which I'll have a lot to say when discussing Dostoevsky." He explains that it is the ethical problem of terrorism that most concerns him, and he opines that 1905 showed that "we are now faced with a new type of man that we should become familiar with." Lukács premised his definition of the ethical problem of terrorism on

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a distinction between an ethics of the empirical world and one of the soul:

> I don't see in Ropshin . . . a symptom of a disease but rather a new manifestation of an old conflict between the first ethic (duties towards social structures) and the second (duties of the soul). The order of priorities always includes characteristic dialectical complications when the soul is not directed toward itself but toward humanity, as is the case with the politician and the revolutionary. One must become a cruel *Realpolitiker* out of a mystical ethic and has to violate the absolute commandment "Thou shalt not kill," which is clearly *not* an obligation towards structures. In essence, this is a very ancient problem expressed most pointedly by Hebbel's Judith: "If God had placed sin between me and the act ordered for me to do, who am I to be able to escape it?" Only the situation is new and the people are different.

These lines from Friedrich Hebbel's play *Judith*, based on the story of a woman who must kill a tyrant, reappeared in his 1919 essay "Tactics and Ethics," which he later described as "an inner balancing of accounts" enabling him to become a Communist.

Between *The Theory of the Novel* and "Tactics and Ethics" Lukács was compelled to serve in the Army Censor's office in Budapest, and his presence led to the formation of the famous "Sunday Circle" of young Hungarian intellectuals. While he returned to work on his aesthetics, events ultimately distracted him. The Bolshevik Revolution heightened his interest in Marx, although he was not yet "converted" to Marxism. That took place in December 1918, the month in which his "habilitation" was finally rejected. A friend described his transformation as a religious one—within a week "Saul became Paul." In retrospect, however, although this may have been the impression Lukács gave at the time, it simplifies his trajectory. It is, after all, hardly astonishing that in a time of world war and revolution a "problematic" intellectual, nurtured in romantic anticapitalism, immersed in German philosophy, and preoccupied with Dostoevsky, became a Marxist.

In early December 1918, before Saul became Paul, he wrote an article on "Bolshevism as a Moral Problem," which rejected bolshevism on the grounds that its premise was "the metaphysical assumption that the bad can engender the good, or, as Razumikhin says in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, that it is possible to lie our way to the truth." This, it would seem, was Lukács's Dostoevskian response to Judith's dilemma, that is until he went rapidly "from Dostoevsky to Hebbel's position," as Michael Löwy puts it in his incisive account of Lukács's evolution. In fact, in "Tactics and Ethics" he goes from Dostoevsky to Hebbel via Ropshin in this telling passage:

> . . . there are situations—tragic situations—in which it is impossible to act without burdening oneself with guilt. But at the same time it teaches us that, even faced with the choice of two ways of incurring guilt, we should still find that there is a standard attaching to correct and incorrect action. This standard we call sacrifice. And just as the individual who chooses between two forms of guilt finally makes the correct choice when he sacrifices his inferior self on the altar of the higher idea, so it also takes strength to assess this sacrifice in terms of the collective action. In the latter case, however, the idea represents an imperative of the world-historical situation, a historico-philosophical mission. In one of his novels Ropshin . . . put the problem of individual terror in the following terms: murder is not allowed, it is an absolute and unpardonable sin; it "may" not, but yet it "must" be committed. Elsewhere in the same book he sees, not the justification (that is impossible) but the ultimate moral basis of the terrorist's act as the sacrifice for his brethren, not only of his life, but also of his purity, his morals, his very soul. In other words, only he who acknowledges unflinchingly and without any reservations that murder is under no circumstances to be sanctioned can commit the murderous deed that is truly—and tragically—moral.

Whereupon Lukács quoted Hebbel's Judith again. In short, faced with the ultimate revolutionary question—that of means and ends—he projected a *tragic* unity of moral opposites. Where once Irma threatened his sacrifice of "life," where once the tragic was conceived by him in the metaphysical and individualized terms of *Soul and Form*, he had arrived at a vision of mass-historical action in which guilt was inescapable. Revolution, redemption—making life into Life—imposes self-sacrifice in the form of necessarily tragic choices.

With this in mind, it is instructive to see what Lukács later wrote on Dostoevsky.[3] In a 1922 article, he stressed the contradiction between Dostoevsky's politics and poetics. The poetic vision was one that could "strip without effort . . . every character, human relationship, and conflict of the reified shell in which they are all presented today and pare them down, to reduce them to their purely spiritual core." This produced a utopianism, he said, a "view that the saving principle of all hardship may be found in pure human relationships. . . ." Lukács dialectically concluded that however reactionary Dostoevsky might have been, his denunciation of revolution "unexpectedly turns into an artis-

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tic glorification of its absolute necessity."

Balzac's ability to portray the classes with which he sympathized as doomed and others as "the real men of the future" led Engels, in a famous letter, to praise the French novelist as a realist. In a 1943 essay on Dostoevsky, Lukács again raises the notion of the emergence of a "new human type." It is, he insists, literature's mission "to put questions, to raise problems in the form of new men and new fates of men," to ask the question properly, not necessarily solve it. Thus Lukács saw in Dostoevsky a realist who presented imperatives at odds with his own political enunciations. For Lukács, Dostoevsky's work remained a protest against modern society and a yearning for a utopia in which men live harmoniously: "The spontaneous, wild and blind revolt of Dostoevsky's characters occurs in the name of the golden age. . . ."

LUKÁCS ARGUED THAT Dostoevsky ultimately left no exit for his characters because he himself didn't believe his faith could be sustainable in his age. Raskolnikov's problem in *Crime and Punishment* was whether he could be a "Napoleon" who stepped over men "for the sake of great aims" and engaged in a "psychological experiment" that risked "the whole physical and moral existence of the experimenter. . . ." In other words, in Raskolnikov Lukács reinvents the problem of Hebbel's Judith *but in terms of an isolated individualism turned radically inward and lacking transcendent purpose*. Thus Raskolnikov's "idea" becomes his sovereign, only to turn into "absolute emptiness" and tragedy as an inevitable consequence of its basis in "overstrained subjectivity." The result is "complete incongruity between action and soul. . . ."

This would seem to complicate the claim that Lukács's conversion to Marxism was one from Dostoevsky to Hebbel. Do not the Marxist Lukács and the Lukács of *The Theory of the Novel* ultimately find Dostoevsky compelling for the same reasons? And might this not help us understand his checkered relation to Stalinism? In the half century after he became a Bolshevik, Lukács lived as a problematic intellectual—a lonely Marxist elephant—in a communist Himalayas woefully distant from the socialist idea; here he was often harassed by those who can be called hares only with great generosity, and he himself stooped to their height on more than one occasion. Could it be that the tension between Hebbel and Dostoevsky was never truly resolved? □

Notes

[1]Many of these studies are excellent and this review-essay is indebted to them: Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979); Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács—From Bolshevism to Romanticism* (London: New Left Books, 1979); Agnes Heller, ed., *Lukács Revalued* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983); Andrew Feenberg, *Lukács, Marx and the Sources of Critical Theory* (Totowa, N.J.: Roman and Littlefield, 1981); and J.M. Bernstein, *The Philosophy of the Novel: Lukács, Marxism and the Dialectics of Form* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). Lucien Goldmann's important essay "The Early Writings of Georg Lukács," *Triquarterly*, Spring 1967, is an abridged translation of an earlier piece. See also Zoltán Tar's introduction to *Selected Correspondence*; Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and his Generation, 1900-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); and Lee Congdon, *The Young Lukács* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

[2]See György Markus's "Life and the Soul: the Young Lukács and the Problem of Culture," in A. Heller, ed., *Lukács Revalued*.

[3]See "Stavrogin's Confession" in Georg Lukács, *Reviews and Articles* (London: Merlin Press, 1983) and "Dostoevsky," in Georg Lukács, *Marxism and Human Liberation* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1973).

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The Spanish Civil War Revisited

Benjamin Martin

We received a number of communications in response to the exchange on Spain between Irving Howe and Ronald Radosh in our Fall 1986 issue. Unfortunately, limitations of space make it impossible to print more than the one that appears below.—Eds.

Spain last year commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. The occasion elicited a massive outpouring of articles, memoirs, books, conferences. The bloody events were re-examined and scrutinized, but one would have had to look far and wide to encounter anything even remotely comparable to Ronald Radosh's recent exercise in trivializing one of this century's most searing social cataclysms. (See his "But Today the Struggle: Spain and the Intellectuals," in the *New Criterion*, October 1986; his exchanges with Irving Howe in *Dissent*, Winter 1987, and Brian Morton in the *Nation* of November 29, 1986 and December 27/January 3, 1987.)

To be sure, there is little to quarrel with in Radosh's assertions concerning Stalin's sinister grab for power. When he goes beyond that and describes the Spanish Republic as a "People's Democracy" (East-European style), he is on exceedingly thin ice. Neither the facts nor the considered judgments of serious scholars support such a claim. To cite but one instance, Javier Tussel, one of Spain's most distinguished historians and a center-right Christian Democrat, tells us that

> Numerous protagonists and historians have indeed adjudged the Republican regime to have been converted into a popular democracy similar to those in Europe after the Second World War whose domination by the Communist party was camouflaged by a democratic appearance. . . . Communists towards the end of the war controlled the sub-secretariats of aviation and agriculture, the headquarters command of the air force, the staff headquarters of the Navy, and the general directorates of security and the *Carabineros*. However, the reality was that though the *Cortes* played no role nor were elections held, the possibility of dissent was notably greater than in the other zone. . . . If the Communists attained great but not decisive influence, it was, as El Campesino said, because "the others did not rise to the occasion." Moreover, the Communist party as a consequence emerged extremely discredited, accused of sectarianism and of having used the government apparatus to eliminate its enemies (such as Nin of the POUM). After having claimed for itself the principal effort in the war, this had an adverse effect and communism experienced the inevitable consequences.

The Spanish Communist party (PCE) even at the height of its power and influence was unable to win the support of the great mass of proletarian Spain, which remained loyal to the Socialist UGT and the anarcho-syndicalist CNT even though both movements were in internal disarray. With Russian and Comintern help the party excelled in organization, discipline, and in invigorating the military effort. But to the end Madrid remained Socialist and Barcelona Cenetista in spite of Stalinist repression and political manipulations. Despite savage Communist persecutions, it never occurred to Poumist and anarcho-syndicalist militants to abandon the Republican cause. It is also worth recalling that Communist political ascendancy was not rooted in Spanish history and tradition but to a large extent was a circumstantial creation of Comintern agents and Russian political blackmail as a condition for supplying war materiel. Once Stalin decided to seek a Nazi-Soviet pact and to abandon his use of Spain as a pawn in his efforts at rapprochement with France and Great Britain, the weakness of PCE support soon became apparent.

Particularly disturbing is Radosh's bestowal of equal responsibility on both sides for the killings and other atrocities. The Civil War had been preceded by a rising climate of violence and political murders (*paseos*) by young hotheads from both sides. In the early months following the July 1936 military rebellion, anarchist extremists, Socialist youth, and criminal elements among others engaged in a murderous rampage against priests and

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other opponents of the Republican government. Political parties possessed their own militias and secret police with which they sought to settle old political scores. Horrified government authorities, political leaders, and trade unionists denounced the killings and valiantly strove to halt the carnage; that was also the outset of a social revolutionary process. Some of them provided refuge and protection for likely victims.

But between the initial chaos and loss of control in the Republican zone and the methodical mass slaughter conducted by the Nationalists, there was a world of difference. One can find in Gabriel Jackson's notable *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War 1931-1939* a scrupulous comparative examination of the revolutionary violence and terror in the two war zones. He estimates that some 20,000 persons perished in the Republican zone from the *paseos* and political reprisals, compared to 200,000 in the Nationalist zone. Moreover, an additional 200,000 "red" prisoners were vindictively executed or died from disease from 1939 to 1945.

Radosh's use of ex-Communist Jorge Semprun's assertion that "under Franco the working class in Spain had more freedom than their counterpart in any country 'improperly called socialist' " is equally misleading. Life in Francoist Spain from the end of the war in 1939 to the early 1950s was brutish and often nightmarish. The vengeful executions of several hundred thousand, the imprisonment and forced labor of thousands of others, the severe privations and repression of the general population made it a cruel, oppressive police state. The defeat of Nazi Germany and the subsequent branding of the pro-axis Caudillo as an international pariah forced him to curry favor with the U.S., as the cold war got under way, by halting the mass executions and toning down the regime's fascist character. Economic boom and industrialization in the 1960s led Franco to again seek admittance to the European Community by moderating his authoritarianism. It is to this period that Semprun refers.

Then comes the non sequitur that had the Republic emerged victorious it would have been a Soviet People's Democracy, thus adversely affecting the allied war effort against Hitler. To sustain his allegation he quotes POUM leader Joaquín Maurín: "From the moment in which the alternative was posed, beginning in June 1937, between the Communist party, at the orders of Moscow, and the opposing military regime, reactionary but Spanish, the conclusion of the Civil War was determined." Did Maurín mean, as Radosh infers, that Spanish Republican supporters preferred a Francoist Spain to a Moscow satellite? Had he read Maurín's *Revolución y contrarrevolución en España*, from which this quote is taken, he would have learned that the author was not posing such a stark alternative. What Maurín clearly intended, as his preceding remarks make clear, is that the PCE was merely an artificial creation of Moscow agents and, once it had removed from power the authentic representatives of the working class, the UGT and CNT, the Republic was doomed.

What excited the passions and imagination of so many outside Spain in "the last crusade" was as much the grossly overdrawn image of an embattled democratic David confronting the fascist Goliath as the inspiring display of Spanish courage and determination. This had come as a desperately awaited reprieve for dispirited progressives and left-wingers everywhere. The powerful German left had proved utterly incapable of preventing Hilter's rise to power; the Austrian Socialist movement, after a pathetic rearguard resistance in Vienna, had similarly displayed its impotence. Czechoslovakia became a sacrifice to Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policy, which through its nonintervention doctrine, also made the embattled Spanish Republican government an easy prey to Stalin's designs. Spaniards, in contrast, were doggedly fighting and dying for a better world.

The innumerable shortcomings afflicting the Republic greatly reduced its capacity to survive a prolonged and bloody civil war on the eve of the Second World War. Julián Besteiro, a noble and decent moderate, withdrew from active participation in the Socialist leadership horrified by the inane "bolshevization" sponsored by Largo Caballero and his followers, convinced that the democratic republic had come a generation too soon "before a liberal, tolerant cultural attitude had taken root in the Spanish masses." In the preface to his *The Spanish Tragedy*, Raymond Carr offers a similar diagnosis:

> I have always regarded the defeat of the Republic and the vengeance of the right after 1939 as a tragedy and I find writing on the Civil War a painful exercise, since it entails, if one is to tell what seems to one to be the truth, a severe and sometimes savage criticism of the errors of one's own side both before and after July 1936. The Republic was defeated not only because of the failure of the democratic nations to supply it with arms, but because of the military and political failures, the factionalism, of the Popular Front. As General Rojo bitterly conceded, "In the political field General Franco triumphed."

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Yet it is a tragedy that, after five decades, has a happy ending. All too aware of the opprobrium attached to the PCE's political role in the civil war, Santiago Carrillo, (then the all-powerful PCE general secretary) sought, at the commencement of the post-Franco era, to make amends by taking the most provocatively revisionist stand among the Eurocommunist parties in Western Europe. To no avail. Historical memory could not be lobotomized. Whatever hopes the PCE entertained of playing a major role in post-Franco national political affairs were completely dashed by the presence of a vigorous, chastened, now anticommunist Socialist party. No longer does one find within the Spanish Socialist party (PSOE), which has served as the ruling party since 1982, those, like the Caballerists of the 1930s, who advocate close collaboration and even merger of the two parties. Today Spanish Communism is a factious, spent, shattered force, fragmented into four fiercely antagonistic factions. □

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Irving Howe

The Myth of Revolution

This spring my book Politics and the Novel *was reissued in paperback by New American Library. The publisher asked me to "bring it up to date" by discussing, however briefly, political fiction written since the Second World War. A formidable task. I ended up doing an Afterword as a series of notes on a number of writers—Gordimer, Naipaul, Garcia Marquez, Kundera, Solzhenitsyn—for essays that may or may not be written. Here, with a few introductory remarks, is the note on Gordimer.*—I.H.

Political fiction has not flourished in the relative stability of the Western countries during the decades after the Second World War. Neither conservative stasis nor social democratic moderation, both of which may be seen as virtues compared to the bloody excesses of recent times and other places, seem able to inspire first-rate novels dealing with political themes. Perhaps we should be grateful for that. Political fiction requires wrenching conflicts, a drama of words and often blood, roused states of being, or at least a memory of these. And in the decades after the Second World War, such excitements have been abundant only in Eastern Europe and parts of the Third World. It's as if, in these uneasy years, two myths were confronting one another in a standoff: the myth of sobering and exhaustion after the debauch of Communism and the myth of revolutionary desperation in the emerging countries as they try to get out from under Western imperialism. Both of these myths have their energizing powers for novelists and both have enabled the making of fine works of fiction; but both also bring writers up against the pain of blockage. Having scourged the falsities of "socialist" countries without socialism and exposed the falsities of "liberated" countries without liberation, writers like Kundera and George Konrad, Naipaul and Mario Vargas Llosa must ask themselves: What next? What possibilities remain in my familiar subject matter?

Novelists committed to political themes do not have to arrive at political solutions: it is usually better that they not try to. But there is, I think, a strong psychological and even moral need among both writers and readers of novels—which is one reason novels are not, in any strict sense, tragedies—to feel that the rendered situation may not be utterly intractable; that, sooner or later, we may detect a slight motion of change. But what if, in all honesty, the writer sees no such possibility? What if, locked into the unfreedom of his Eastern European country or the wretchedness of Third World nation, he can find no way out? How much will he then be able to do with his irony and anger, his force and fury? Will there be a point at which he will find himself acknowledging the impotence of words?

THESE ARE NOT QUESTIONS we need answer, or pretend to be able to answer. For writers they may in fact be beginnings, not ends. A historical impasse should not be airily dismissed with light literary chatter about "the imagination transcending," etc. There are realities the imagination cannot transcend and should not try to. The writer can only struggle, through the sobrieties of realism or the artifice of antirealism, hoping to cope with or get round, or best of all, engage once again with the urgencies of his moment. Many realities sooner or later loom before us as impasse, and all writers look for ways to scale walls or slip past barbed wires. Critics ought not to be in a hurry to tell them they can't do it.

There remain in the world a few situations in which the myth of revolution as pure and heroic liberation can retain its hold on the novelist's imagi-

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nation. But not without a good many qualifications and hesitations.

Nadine Gordimer—Revolution Yes, But . . .

By inclination and training a novelist of sensibility, Nadine Gordimer writes as a liberal who has apparently begun to wonder whether liberalism is adequate to the anguish of South Africa and whether revolutionary measures must be anticipated and perhaps acquiesced in. Presenting herself as a cultivated middle-class white, she identifies with the outcry of the blacks even as she realizes she cannot speak for and, in any close way, about them. If it is still possible anywhere in the world to think of politics in absolute moral terms, as a blunt counterposition of good and evil, that place is South Africa. The stark circumstances of that country lend force and passion to the work of such writers as Gordimer, J.M. Coetzee, and André Brink, all of whom are haunted—but thereby also enabled—by a great commanding subject. Yet this subject can also prove to be a tyranny: narrow, sterile, confining. Art can be crushed by the sheer moral weight of certain subjects, and these gifted South African writers find themselves gasping for a bit of imaginative space, some portion of freedom from the subject that seems inescapable. What lends their writing a particularly somber cast is an awareness, be it spoken or not, that in circumstances where evil appears to be so complete, a triumph of good might end in a new kind of evil—and that, nevertheless, it remains a moral imperative to accept that triumph. The position has its discomforts.

In *Burger's Daughter*, her most distinguished work, Nadine Gordimer focuses upon a small group of South African whites, in condition middle class and in opinion Communist, who at risk to their lives and liberty have thrown themselves into the movement for black liberation. This enables Gordimer to negotiate a tentative, nervous entry into the outer precincts of black rebellion and a much more confident entry into the circle of Lionel Burger, a physician who is also a leader of the South African Communist party. Soon after the novel's opening, Burger is arrested by the government and sentenced in court to life imprisonment.

It is, I think, an extraordinary feat this late in the century to make a Communist leader into a sympathetic, even noble figure without succumbing to either cant or sentimentality. Gordimer manages this not through a full-faced portrayal—she is novelistically shrewd enough to keep a certain distance from Burger—but through a series of narrative skirmishes that complicate and perhaps even call into question her narrative of revolutionary heroism. It is hard to imagine a novelist managing so positive a response to a Communist leader anywhere else in the world. But the fate of Lionel Burger can still move us because in South Africa, for whatever reasons and with whatever ultimate consequences, the Communists have suffered in behalf of black liberation. Gordimer, however, is too intelligent to stop there. She finds ways to bring in the Moscow trials, the Prague spring, and Burger's part in expelling a deviant comrade from the party, so that the Burger shown as a selfless and heroic man is also shown to be a faithful agent of Stalinism. Precisely insofar as she registers these complications does Gordimer enable credence for her version of Burger.

He is rarely seen directly. It's as if Gordimer refuses fully to yield herself to the pathos of his fate even as she is using all of her literary resources to make us respond to that fate. A series of secondary characters registers a variety of feelings about him—some influence of Henry James's techniques may be visible here. Burger's comrades adore him. An intransigent black nationalist, indifferent as a matter of principle to Burger the individual, is quite ready to scoff at him as a mere "useful" white. A young white intellectual, prematurely world-weary, keeps probing Burger's story for skeptical depreciations. And Burger's daughter Rosa, through whose intelligence much of the story is strained, opens up old and painful memories: what it was like to have lived as a child in a home totally dedicated to politics, what it was like to have it assumed that the daughter would necessarily follow in the footsteps of the father.

Rosa rebels a little by fleeing to the civilized assurances of Western Europe, as if the act of "finding herself" must mean for a time ceasing to be her father's daughter. At this point the book turns, for several chapters, into something close to a novel of sensibility; yet it's precisely this "digression," while not always absorbing in its own right, that helps to sustain that larger portion of the novel which rests, however uncomfortably, on the myth of revolutionary heroism. Rosa now comes to believe that her father and his friends had "made a Communism for 'local conditions' . . . a connection with blacks that was completely personal. In this way, their Communism was the antithesis of anti-individualism." Gordimer neither indicates her own acceptance of this judgment nor presses her readers to accept it; for the purposes of fictional credibility, it is enough that we suppose it is a plausible or likely judgment by Burger's daughter.

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THOUGH NOT VERY POLITICAL and certainly not a Communist, Rosa returns to join the black liberation struggle, becoming a prisoner like her father. The immediate task, apparently, must overwhelm all doubts and complicating perceptions, and thereby the revolutionary myth does achieve an equivocal sort of vindication. With what result? We can hardly be sure, since it is neither the politics of revolution or its mere rejection which dominates this novel; it is the sense of politics as a terrible force beyond the reach of the rationality we like to suppose in control. □

Louis F. Cooper

Fair Trade and the Marketplace of Ideas

Persecution for the expression of opinions seems to me perfectly logical. If you have no doubt of your premises or your power and want a certain result with all your heart you naturally express your wishes in law and sweep away all opposition. To allow opposition by speech seems to indicate that you think the speech impotent, as when a man says that he has squared the circle, or that you doubt either your power or your premises. But when men have realized that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas—that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out. That at any rate is the theory of our Constitution.

Justice Holmes, dissenting
in *Abrams v. United States* (1919)

The "marketplace of ideas" is an old notion, older than Holmes's famous articulation of the "theory of our Constitution," older indeed than the Constitution itself. In the early decades of this century, however, Holmes, Brandeis, and others gave the principle of "free trade in ideas" an exceptionally powerful rhetorical expression, thereby laying the foundation for the elaborate edifice of modern First Amendment doctrine.

On the whole, this has been a worthy enterprise; the range of legally permissible speech in America is broader than in most other democracies. But the enterprise has had one major flaw: it has never come to grips with the reality of economic inequality and its central place in American capitalism. In the name of free speech, the Supreme Court has permitted unlimited "independent" expenditures in political campaigns, which have largely benefited conservative candidates. As Thomas Edsall points out in *The New Politics of Inequality*, the disproportionate impact of such spending stems in large part from the "increasing intersection" since the mid 1970s "of the interests of the right-wing ideological community, the business community, and the Republican party."

THE FACT IS THAT IN A SOCIETY built on substantial material inequalities, a *genuine* free trade in ideas of the sort envisioned by Holmes is probably unattainable; some voices are bound to be heard much more loudly than others, for reasons having nothing to do with the intrinsic merit of the ideas being advocated. Perhaps, then, the more practical goal for this society is not free trade in ideas but fair trade—some assurance, in other words, that one particular viewpoint will not completely drown out others because of its adherents' power (financial or otherwise) in the ideological marketplace. This kind of assurance likely requires some sort of government intervention.

In fact, the government took a small step in this direction roughly forty years ago, when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) promulgated the fairness doctrine, a regulation whose future as of this writing (December 1986) is very much in doubt. The fairness doctrine requires broadcasters to cover "controversial issues of public importance" and to afford "reasonable opportunities" for the airing of differing views on those issues. (The fairness doctrine is not the same as the so-called equal-time rule for political candidates, although the two are often confused.)

Although the fairness doctrine generally has not been enforced in a vigorous or punitive way, over the years it has given radio listeners and television viewers access to a somewhat greater range of opinions on current affairs than they would otherwise have had. When the Supreme Court upheld

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the fairness doctrine's constitutionality in the 1969 case *Red Lion Broadcasting Co. v. FCC*, Justice Byron White spoke of the right of viewers and listeners to receive "suitable access to social, political, esthetic, moral, and other ideas and experiences," and said that it is that "right of the viewers and listeners, not the right of the broadcasters, which is paramount."

In recent years, the *Red Lion* decision has come under vigorous attack. Its concern with the scarcity of frequencies in the electromagnetic spectrum is said to have been rendered obsolete by the rise of cable television and other new technologies. And broadcasters complain bitterly that the Supreme Court, in upholding the fairness doctrine, deprived them of First Amendment rights enjoyed by print journalists.

Not surprisingly, the Reagan-era FCC, as part of its mad rush to deregulate the entire telecommunications field, has sided with the broadcast industry. In August 1985 the Commission issued a lengthy report which concluded, via a highly selective and distorted reading of the evidence, that the fairness doctrine's operation "inhibits the presentation of issues of public importance . . . impedes the public's access to the marketplace of ideas and poses an unwarranted intrusion upon the journalistic freedom of broadcasters." The FCC called on Congress—which had made the fairness doctrine part of the Communications Act in 1959 (albeit in a somewhat ambiguous way)—to repeal the doctrine.

Although Congress is unlikely to accede to this request, the fairness doctrine is almost certainly heading for another Supreme Court test. Despite the presence of one or two tantalizing hints in late Burger Court opinions, it is not clear how the Rehnquist Court will act. If the Court does strike down the fairness doctrine, pundits will tally "winners" and "losers"—the broadcast industry on one hand, various public-interest and advocacy groups (both liberal and conservative) on the other. But the real losers will be the millions of Americans who rely on television and radio for news and public affairs information, and whose already insufficient influence in the marketplace of ideas will have been further reduced. □

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Emanuel Geltman

They Were in Exile—and Needed Help

There have been millions upon millions of refugees. Most of them have received considerable media attention, even where concrete support (food, decent living conditions) was meager and inadequate. One group of refugees, perhaps because they "merely" numbered in the tens of thousands, received almost no attention and, but for the dedicated help of a few people—one in particular—little would have been done to alleviate their wretched condition. Nancy Macdonald was that "one," and over the years she recruited friends and built a small organization that served the needs of the Spanish exiles after the Spanish Civil War.

In a recently published book, Nancy (a first-name privilege I take, having known her for almost the entire period covered) presents the story of these exiles and what was done to help them—principally, the non- or anti-Communist left: anarchists, socialists, POUMists (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista:* United Marxist Workers Party).*

It all began, for Nancy, in 1941, when she received a letter from Victor Serge (see *Dissent*, Winter 1984) asking "if we could help a Spanish refugee, Juan Andrade, suffering with tuberculosis in the prison of Montauban in Vichy-ruled France." Andrade was one of the leaders of the POUM. In Spain, while fighting Franco's forces, he and his comrades had been persecuted by the Stalinists. (The intellectual leader of the POUM, Andrés Nin, had been assassinated by the Stalinists.) Serge wrote that, with thirteen other POUMists, Andrade "had been condemned by a military tribunal of the Vichy Government, sitting behind closed doors [in Montauban, November 17-18, 1941], for having maintained an illegal organization with connections in Spain." Andrade was sentenced to five years (from which he was freed by Spanish *maquis*). With some friends, Nancy sent food and money before communication with France was ended by the Nazi takeover. Vichy was

**Homage to the Spanish Exiles: Voices from the Spanish Civil War.* Preface by Mary McCarthy. (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1986). $19.95

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not sympathetic to Spanish refugees, nor were subsequent French governments much better.

In these high-tech days when causes good and bad seem unable to operate without sophisticated computerized appeals and organizations, it is good to be reminded that a few individuals, working with dedication and minimum resources, can accomplish worthy goals. Ad hoc and formal committees, efforts of one sort or another, followed this first step of helping Andrade. Finally, in 1952, Nancy and her husband Dwight sent a leaflet, *Proposals for a Committee to Aid Spanish Refugees in France*, to friends who had already contributed in one way or another. The leaflet listed specific needs: for example, used clothing, "monthly subsidies for Republican Dispensaries in Montauban and Toulouse.... Help for 90 people in hospitals. ... Aid for 74 tuberculars...." They attracted sponsors, and Spanish Refugee Aid (SRA) finally came into being in 1953. In its first year, April 1953-March 1954, SRA provided "10 artificial limbs, 2 wheel chairs, 14 dentures, 75 CARE blankets," hearing aids, and money to bring families together. There were then 160,000 Spanish exiles living a precarious existence in France, fifteen years after the end of the Civil War. There were still 40,000 of them in France after the death of Franco.

SRA set $25,000 as its goal the first year. In 32 years it raised over $5,000,000. With a remarkable set of records and diaries at hand, Nancy can account for every penny. Such and such a person contributed thousands of dollars (down to the decimal point) over the years.

If her tone is generally dispassionate, Nancy can be quite acerbic, perhaps unfairly, about those who might have helped more than they did. (Pablo Casals—SRA's honorary chairman—never gave a concert for SRA. Well....) She is also lavish in her praise of those who gave generously in time, funds, or, as in the special case of Alexander Calder, made frequent contributions of their art (so that the sale of art, Calder's and the works of others, became an important source of income). Working with volunteers and a small and meagerly paid staff, SRA felt and served a great need.

Nancy went to Spain in 1977, having visited refugee shelters in France before that. During her visits she taped interviews with refugees. Scattered through the book, they make compelling reading. They are fairly long, for the most part, and interspersed with questions. Unfortunately, we haven't the space to offer more than one sample, a brief selection from an interview with Juan Andrade and his companion, Maria Teresa, taped in 1967. Andrade "was the Don Quixote type, tall, gaunt, and idealistic. Maria Teresa was his Sancho Panza, short, lively, and down to earth."

Andrade: Escape to France

"When Barcelona fell (January 26, 1939), we were in [a Communist] prison and we came to an agreement with our jailers to leave and go to France together. Our group consisted of those who had been in the Barcelona prison, the executive committee of the POUM and a few comrades who had been arrested for their activities connected with the party.

"In reality the story is rather picturesque and special. The troops of Franco were nearing Barcelona and most of the inhabitants were leaving. And the jailers and the director of the prison wanted to flee from Spain too and see if they could cross the frontier. And then in agreement with us, they pretended to transfer the prison to Gerona and all of us left together in a truck. In Gerona, the prison of Barcelona was installed in an old factory. But naturally there was what one might call a sort of camaraderie between the jailers and us. Because all we wanted to do was to cross the frontier and go to France. Well, as Franco's forces continued to advance, we decided to move the prison once again from Gerona to Agullana, which was a town very near the frontier. And here again we found a place which must have been a factory, and here the prison was installed again. But we were able to go out freely....

"The second day we went out, we were very surprised to discover that the Army Staff of the Communist Party and the big military powers had established their headquarters in Agullana. And so we decided to leave immediately because we feared the worst. That night, at 4 or 5 in the morning, all the comrades left, but this time without our guards. We went silently and crossed the border and started walking towards the interior of France. But in the first town we came to, there was a police barrier. They arrested us, put us in a truck and took us to Le Perthus, and made us cross the frontier into Spain.

"Again, fearing that the Communists would recognize us, we decided to go to the mountains to try and cross the frontier in a spot where there wouldn't be such an abundance of people fleeing from the Spanish war. There were difficulties; we slept for two days in the mountains, we had no food, and there was no place to find any. I remember well the acorns and chestnuts we ate. Then we decided to send two comrades as delegates who, hiding and

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avoiding the French police, went to a bar in the French town nearby to telephone to Paris. Our comrades in Paris sent a truck to pick us up and they brought with them bread and cold cuts, enough for a big meal. We were half starved, so the first thing we did when they arrived was to sit down and eat.

"The trip to Paris wasn't easy, because police were stationed along the way and the truck was stopped frequently. They were arresting all the Spaniards and taking them to concentration camps. But the comrades in Paris had taken precautions and we were successful in passing all the police barriers. They had an official document made which said that we were ill and they were taking us to be hospitalized in Paris.

"We were all very weak and I was in the worst condition because I was already weak when I left the prison. After two nights of rain in the mountains my weakness became extreme . . . I had started writing two books in prison and they were the principal thing I had taken when we left the prison in Barcelona. Although they couldn't have weighed much, being paper, I abandoned them in the mountains because they hindered my walking.

"When we arrived in Paris, we were placed in various homes of comrades, or sympathizers of the Spanish Republic. First I spent several weeks in the home of a woman who belonged to the classic French bourgeoisie. I was very well received . . . [Later] I was sent to the janitor's apartment in a house in the well-known workers' district of St. Paul. And there I was received like a real son of the caretaker and like a comrade by her nephew, who . . . had asked for a Spanish refugee. . . .

"At first it was I alone who received the solidarity of those who took me in. My companion, Maria Teresa, had stayed in Barcelona. She was imprisoned like me and she left prison only when the Fascists were marching through the streets. She was in a really difficult position. But finally, thanks to the solidarity of a comrade, she found a place to be free from the persecution of the Fascists. And I was running all sorts of risks to try and get in touch with her, as we were cut off. I had the idea of writing a card in a special sort of way, sending it to her address where we used to live. Sending this card was a shot in the dark and I was really lucky. The card arrived and the caretaker, whose husband belonged to the CNT [*Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*: National Confederation of Labor], took the card from the postman. She knew Maria Teresa's address and immediately took it to her." □

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William Adams

Platoon: Of Heroes and Demons

"And I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

Moby Dick

"I keep thinking," Michael Herr writes in *Dispatches,* "about all the kids who got wiped out by seventeen years of war movies before coming to Vietnam to get wiped out for good.... We'd all seen too many movies...." It is a wonderful and horrible epigram. The Vietnam War was indeed a screened event, and it lingers exactly like a movie in the mind, inseparable from the images by which it came to us around dinner, or wedged between *Bonanza* and the late night show. And Herr is surely right that many of those who fought in Vietnam cut their teeth on Audie Murphy and John Wayne, who were *our* Achilles and Aeneas, ancient longings in modern form.

But Herr had, I think, something even more serious and bitterly ironic in mind; it was our imagination that killed us. That means not only that the reality of war turned out to be different from the image, though that was true enough. It also means that we were seduced by notions of personal and collective heroism, prepared for destruction by dazzling images of virtue that were ultimately, and merely, deadly.

Something akin to such thoughts must have been at work in the mind of Oliver Stone in the making of the film *Platoon.* For *Platoon* is in part a study in irony, and in particular the ironies of the imagination. It is also a war film quite self-consciously set within the tradition of American war films, and in its own ironic rendering of the heroic *mythos,* it is not only a commentary upon that tradition, but a claim on collective memory as well. The larger problem over which this film forces one to brood is how events become memorialized, how memory serves imagination, and, inescapably, how imagination arouses, seduces, even punishes. "Essentially what I wanted to say," as Stone himself put it, "was, Remember. Just remember what that war was. Remember what war is."

As if in acknowledgment of Stone's intention, the public response to this film, extraordinary in view of its relatively small budget, has taken shape chiefly in terms of its claim to realism. *Newsweek* put it nicely in its cover story of January 26: "*Platoon*: Vietnam As It Really Was." This was, we were told, the first true film about Vietnam, for it showed the war as it was on the ground, for the grunts, stripped of the hysterical machismo of Sylvester Stallone and the surreal symbolics of Francis Coppola and Michael Cimino.

This response is arresting, for while there is much to say about this film, it is surely not that it is "realistic." I do not mean that the film does not in places employ the conventions of cinematic and narrative realism, for of course it does, at times with great power. It is also scrupulous in its look. But *Platoon* is nonetheless a piece of fiction, and one, moreover, that is guided by a series of quite specific, and nonrealistic, literary and cinematic conventions. This, it seems to me, is a much more interesting state of affairs. For viewed as representation instead of reality, *Platoon* can be assessed in terms of what it much more clearly is: a piece of interpretation, a reconstruction of the past, a claim on how we should see ourselves. As a piece of storytelling, it also opens out upon all those other stories it implicitly evokes, challenges or undermines, telling us something interesting and even useful in the process about our collective representations. *Platoon* is at once much less and much more serious than reality; it is a fable of heroism.

It is a fable based upon the soldier's story, the personal report of one who went, survived, and

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came back to share his vision. It seems obvious now, but until Stone no one approached the war in quite this way, at least on film. *Platoon* is essentially a war memoir; focused, compressed, internal. It matters greatly, of course, that the war is Vietnam. But Stone has extracted a tiny existential slice of that immense and jumbled history and buried the camera in it. Thus the stunning absence of explicit politics and history in this film; thus, too, its oddly abstract, uprooted feeling, "somewhere in the jungle," "sometime in the war."

It is a memoir that begins in romance and descends into irony. The hero, Chris Taylor (Charlie Sheen), is a self-confessed romantic. Early in the film, he admits to his astonished platoon mates that he volunteered for Vietnam, out of a mixture of guilt, patriotism, and some deeper, inchoate desire to experience the war. More important, the surface structure of *Platoon* is classic romance. Chris drops into the bloody inferno of war, does combat with real and imaginary enemies, and finally emerges, transfigured, in the final sequence. Stone tracks this journey through the device of letters directed to the hero's grandmother. "Maybe I can learn something I don't yet know," he tells her, "see something I haven't yet seen."

Appropriately enough, *Platoon* is constructed around the exigencies of this mythic, transformative journey: the dark, primeval jungle that constantly limits the hero's (and our) perspective; the invisible and finally unavailable enemy, revealed in the open, and apart from the nervous gaze of the Americans, only once in the entire film; and finally, the fraternal order of arms, the platoon, that surrounds Taylor and provides him with his insight and pain. In the very center of this microcosmic community stand two sergeants, Elias and Barnes, the personifications of good and evil, and the foci of Taylor's longings, temptations, and rage. They are figures of truly mythic proportions, worthy adversary and model for the mythic sojourner. And as the conclusion of the film finally makes clear, it doesn't matter much whether they exist or not. For it is finally the battle in Taylor's mind, the internal and psychic confrontation of murderer and saint, that counts. Hell is inside me, Taylor discovers, in the dark and untraveled recesses of the soul.

The crucial difference between *Platoon* and the conventional war romance is the irony that attends and steadily undermines it, first announced in the bitter epitaph from *Ecclesiastes* that accompanies the opening frames: "Rejoice oh young man in thy youth." It is an appropriate introduction, for neither hero nor viewer is allowed to conclude that the journey was enviable or admirable, at least in the traditional senses of these words. "I made a mistake," Taylor writes to his grandmother shortly after his first experience in combat. He realizes almost immediately that his romantic longings, and the war they have brought him to, will have terrible consequences, grotesquely out of proportion to his expectations. More graphically, the film ends shortly after Taylor has brutally executed Barnes. Avatar of violence and death, Barnes in some sense gets what he deserves. At the same time he wins a kind of victory in forcing Chris to become his double. The wisdom of the hero is always dearly bought, but in this case, *Platoon* suggests, it may not be worth the price.

IT IS IN THESE IRONIC REVERSALS that *Platoon* finds its clearest and most powerful voice. In opposition, to begin with, to the dominant cinematic tradition of war stories, and the facile view of heroism that they have notoriously represented. There will be few small or large boys coming away from *Platoon* with visions of combat dancing in their heads. Even more significantly, perhaps, it is this irony that leads to the subdued but noteworthy political perspective of *Platoon*. Stone eschews blatant ideological perspectives, of right or left. But there is a definite form of political argument hidden in the folds of these silences. Ideological language is absent from the landscape of *Platoon* because it was in fact irrelevant and unavailable, the film suggests, to the soldiers caught within the real, historical landscape of Vietnam. The realities of exhaustion, fear, and confusion overwhelm the political language of geopolitics and national interest. Nothing, it seems, can bridge the gap between political reason, on the one hand, and the actual, terribly concrete business of killing people, on the other.

What Stone proposes in place of ideology and conventional political analysis is psychohistory. "We didn't fight the enemy in Vietnam," he has Taylor conclude, "we fought ourselves." Both writer and speaker intend this remark on the level of biography, as a symbol of the battle waged between the murderous and binding impulses in Taylor's soul. But the metaphor pushes outward, like rings in a pool. The civil war in the spirit recrystallizes in the dramatic struggle between Barnes and Elias, outward emblems of inner forces, and between the platoon members gathered in the wake of their charismatic powers. Abstract psychology is here reconnected to history. Since there was no obvious, sustaining logic to the war, because the reality of the place turned out to be so wildly out of joint with the political understanding given

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to frame it, we turned the guns—in bitterness, regret, self-contempt—on ourselves.

But the widest, though less visible, referent of the theme of civil war is American society and culture itself, torn by its own collective conflicts and demons. Shortly before Sergeant Barnes leads the platoon on a murderous rampage in a Vietnamese hamlet, Stone suddenly thrusts us into the world of *Moby Dick*. "He was our Ahab," Chris writes to his grandmother, "the focus of our murderous rage." It is a brief and jarring allusion, but one that resonates loudly on reflection. For Melville knew and wrote a good deal about demons; private, public, and the kinship between the two. The monster Ahab pursues is as much the creature of his own imaginary obsessions as it is the work of nature. *Platoon* meditates and allegorizes on similar themes. The tantalizing suggestion in Chris Taylor's concluding epigram—"we fought ourselves"—is that the very conception of the war, its perceived purpose and necessity, rested on a demonology engendered in the depths of our collective political imagination. At this level of historical and political allegory, the political as well as personal lesson of Taylor's epic journey in irony coincides with the haunting and nervous warning of John Quincy Adams, recently resurrected by William Appleman Williams: "America goes not in search of monsters to destroy. She might become the dictatress of the world. She would no longer be the mistress of her own spirit."

Without doubt *Platoon* is the most significant film to be produced about Vietnam to date, for it challenges not only a revisionist history of American involvement there, but an older cinematic tradition of heroic storytelling as well. Yet there are also things about *Platoon* that are disturbing, and precisely where it is most ambitious. If *Platoon* is a counter-fable, an effort to construct a subversive myth of both the war in Vietnam and the broader problem of war and heroic virtue, it is also a truncated alternative, incomplete in both its personal and political vision. The incompletion attests in part to the limits of Stone's interpretation. But it is also connected in revealing ways to the broader field of cultural imagination and memory the film engages and attempts to reform.

There are insurmountable problems, to begin with, in the romantic structure of the memoir Stone uses as his narrative vehicle. Perhaps Paul Fussell is right that all war memoirs are inevitably romances, in spite of their intentions. *Platoon* is at one level unquestionably ironic, a journey that undoes its hero. But it also seems to me that at some deeper level Stone undermines his own irony, limiting the reversals he permits his hero to undergo. The romantic quality of the quest that brings Chris Taylor (and Stone) to Vietnam lingers on, in other words, in spite of the misery it brings about. And it does so, I think, in the manner in which Stone concludes his narrative. The boy-man who reflects over the final sequence of the film bears the unmistakable mark and charisma of one transfigured by his passage through hell. He is the bearer of a special sort of wisdom, unavailable to all but those who have endured the crucible of combat.

This is consistent both with things Stone has said about his own preoccupation with Vietnam and with certain qualities of the film itself. *Platoon* is at moments bizarrely sentimental, particularly in light of its tough and "realistic" pretensions. More telling, perhaps, is the manner in which Stone constructs the characters of Elias and Barnes, the towering figures Taylor confronts and internalizes in his journey. For they are indeed romanticized figures, parodic images of good and evil, the sort of model and antithesis one demands in all romantic narratives. Finally, there is the film's apocalyptic conclusion, itself a parody of Coppola's, where recognition and transformation blaze forth in a furious rush of images of destruction and rebirth.

These romantic sentiments and devices are never definitively countered by the irony which otherwise shadows the plot of *Platoon*, and in this respect Stone has sustained, indeed made a stunning contribution to, a literary archetype already well established in the American imagination: Vietnam veteran as antihero, survivor, victim, and outcast, cut off from the rest of society by his unique, and preferably ineffable, form of suffering and knowledge. This is an image especially seductive among Vietnam veterans themselves, and it is no doubt part of the explanation of the film's remarkable success. The antihero is, after all, a kind of hero, a darkly charismatic and seductive persona, at once exemplar and object of a certain kind of longing. Significantly, it is an image perfectly consistent with Stone's personal biography, recast and reinterpreted in the figure of Chris. A wounded and decorated veteran of Vietnam, Stone admits to having been seduced by the image of distant and exotic danger, not once but twice in his life. But the focus of Stone's own highly literate and sophisticated romanticism was not Audie Murphy or John Wayne. It was *Lord Jim*. It is hard not to wonder if Stone, reader of Conrad, did not find in Vietnam,

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and thus in *Platoon*, exactly what he was looking for: antihero, counterromance, transfiguring journey into the heart of darkness. It is, in any case, through the image of such rites of passage that *Platoon*, ironically, continues to inform us of the romantic possibilities of war.

There are difficulties, as well, with the broader moral and political claims of *Platoon*, condensed in Chris Taylor's final reflection. At several levels of meaning, the claim is powerfully descriptive and just: the violence the soldier finds lurking in himself; the decay of the order of loyalty, comradeship, and patriotism into anarchy; the mortal struggle of destructive and humane impulses that has been the subject of the literature of war since *The Iliad*.

The problem emerges in the wider ranges of implication of Stone's summation. There is, as I have said, a very striking criticism of American political culture implicit in *Platoon*, a criticism that attempts to couple the highly rationalized language of foreign policy with the darker impulses of our historic demonology. In the age of Reagan and the *contras*, it should not be hard to see the value of this perspective. But it is a treacherous point of view as well. For surely in another sense the claim that we went to Vietnam and fought only ourselves is profoundly, almost obscenely false, even at the figurative level at which it is intended. There is some risk, in other words, that by internalizing the war, at both the personal and political level, one becomes both critic and victim of a national mythology. There is something dreamy about the conclusion of *Platoon*, as if the entire Vietnam experience were some phantasm of the national spirit, begun and concluded in the imagination, cut off from history and the invisible "others" who were finally, and merely, bit players in this extended drama of the American psyche. Stone's allegorical memoir thus comes close at moments to reproducing precisely what it otherwise draws into its critical light, the imperial temptation to see the world and one's actions within it as reflections of an internal revery. A final and obviously unintended irony; for to "remember," as Stone urges us so strenuously to do, could not, I take it, mean to withdraw even further into the bag of mythology which we manage so easily to wrap around us. Yet that is precisely the symbolic momentum of the final scene of *Platoon*, the wounded hero whisked from the scene by the ubiquitous helicopter, his gaze turned inward on the vast mystery of his own nature. □

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In the Magazines

P*hilippine Human Rights Update*, published by the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines, 214 N. Domingo St. Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines.

The U.S. news media, which seem to take their intellectual inspiration from *People* magazine, have focused almost exclusively on Corazon Aquino in their coverage of the Philippines. But though her ascension to the presidency really was a wonderful event, the human rights situation in the Philippines remains terrible.

The organization that publishes this *Update* has been nominated for a Nobel Prize for its work on behalf of human rights. The international edition is wretchedly written and edited, but to complain too much about verbal barbarities would be a little shameful. This is an important publication.

The September 15/October 14, 1986 issue declares that despite Aquino's good intentions, "the country's human rights situation remained no different from Marcos' heydays." From February 26 to September 30, 1986, the center received reports of 603 illegal arrests, 43 disappearances, 238 cases of torture, and 43 cases of "extra-judicial or extra-legal killing with clear political motive." As disturbing as the murders themselves is the fact that none of the perpetrators—and none of those in the military who committed murders under the Marcos regime—have been brought to trial.

The *PHRU* defines human rights to include more than freedom from violence: it admits to a "bias for the poor, deprived and oppressed." The October 15/November 14, 1986 issue featured an article on "Smokey Mountain," a Manila shantytown where almost 20,000 people live alongside a huge garbage dump:

> The residents' lives depend on the garbage. Each day, they . . . await the arrival of the garbage trucks. As the trucks start to unload, people swarm around like flies, pushing, fighting, and elbowing each other for choice items. . . . It is not surprising to see starving children eat spoiled bread and fruits from the garbage. . . .

The *PHRU* is by no means hostile to Aquino: it sees her as a sincere reformer whose freedom is drastically limited by the military and the U.S. But her attempts to appease the military and her lack of a strategy for ending "foreign domination of the country's politics and business" elicit repeated expressions of concern.

We in the U.S. bear a great deal of responsibility for the continuing misery in the Philippines. Our government still presses for military solutions to social problems; still insists on fiscal "austerity." We congratulate ourselves on the part we played in their transition to democracy—and most of us don't even notice that we've still got our boot on their neck.

BRIAN MORTON

N*ews from Within*, Alternative Information Center, P.O. Box 165, West Jerusalem, Israel.

This is a small magazine with a homemade look, combining articles on Israeli politics with information about the human rights situation in the occupied territories.

The magazine is put out by the Alternative Information Center, a small organization sympathetic to Palestinian nationalism, staffed by Jews and Arabs. In addition to publishing *News from Within*, the center provides information to Israeli and foreign journalists and runs a commercial printing press. Last February 16th, police closed down the center's office and arrested six members of its staff. The closure was carried out without formal charges, as permitted by the 1948 Prevention of Terrorism ordinance.

Five of those arrested were released within two days. The center's director, Michael Warshawsky, was charged with rendering services to a terrorist organization; he was released on March 17th, on the equivalent of fifty thousand dollars' bail.

I heard of *News From Within* only after it became illegal. I've seen three issues. The lead article of the January 26th, 1987 issue gives a good idea of what the magazine is about. It's a day-by-day calendar of clashes between Arabs and Jews in the occupied territories during the previous week. Citing the statement of the Israeli government that the "situation in Judea, Samaria and Gaza had

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returned to normal" after a wave of unrest, the editors said they were presenting the calendar so that "we can learn something of what their 'normality' means."

On the 17th, prisoners in Kfar Yuna jail go on a hunger strike demanding hot water, access to newspapers, adequate lighting, and so on. On the 18th, a curfew is imposed on Gaza City after a Molotov cocktail is thrown at an Israeli vehicle; in al-Aydeh refugee camp, students' homes are raided, "with no reason given." On the 19th, Palestinians stone a car belonging to an Israeli religious school, and Israeli settlers fire on them in reprisal. On the same day, the occupation authorities issue a four-day closure order of an-Nahah University. On the 20th, seventy families in Khan Yunis are informed that their houses are to be demolished because they were built without a license; they are given a week to move their belongings. On the 21st, the managing editor of *Al Fajr* is interrogated after the publication of an interview with Yasser Arafat: the interview violated the Prevention of Terrorism law, which forbids expression of sympathy for illegal organizations such as the PLO. There's more, but you get the idea.

This article is all the more disturbing in that it isn't the least bit lurid: it simply documents the constant tensions inevitable in a state of military occupation, even during periods of "normality."

Often enough, *News from Within* does indulge in lurid rhetoric: it bristles with ritualistic comparisons of Israel and South Africa, which accomplish nothing except to inflame an already difficult subject. But democracies can presumably still distinguish between lurid rhetoric and terrorism.

Warshawsky has been charged with several offenses under the Prevention of Terrorism ordinance. The government claims that some of the West Bank organizations for which the center provided typesetting services—a students' group, a women's group, and others—have ties to George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Warshawsky has challenged the government to show that such ties exist, adding that "I am not a . . . sympathizer or close to the Popular Front and in dozens of articles . . . I have conducted an argument with its methods and ideology." To establish his guilt under the ordinance, in any case, the government would have to show that Warshawsky *knowingly* aided an illegal organization; and it hasn't even tried to do this.

A new issue of *News from Within* appeared on February 24th, in defiance of the suspension order. The lead article is a statement from the AIC, charging that the center was closed because of its efforts in behalf of the rights of Palestinian political prisoners and its success in challenging the Israeli Defense Force's "monopoly on the flow of information from the occupied territories."

The rest of the issue is made up of comments about the case from the Israeli press. According to an excerpt from an article in *HaAretz*, the closing of the center has been protested by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. The association questioned the idea that *News from Within* could have endangered state security, since every issue of the magazine had been cleared by government censors. (Under the Emergency Defense Regulations enacted by the British Mandatory Government in 1945 and still in force, all publications in Israel are subject to prior censorship.)

The issue also quoted Pinhas Inbari of the newspaper *Al Hamishmar*, organ of the left-Socialist party Mapam:

> The Alternative Information Center succeeded in drawing the attention of the Israeli and foreign press to the darker side of the West Bank. . . . The information . . . they distributed [was] always interesting. . . . The problem was that the topics were often taken from the depths of security matters and it was very difficult to judge to what degree the center's reports had been established. . . . [But if] the Alternative Information Center is actually shut down for good, the Israeli press will lose a peephole [on an area] which is very difficult to report on. . . . It is of great doubt that security will benefit from this. It is definitely a loss for democracy.

The Prevention of Terrorism ordinance has been used in the past to shut down publications in the occupied territories, but this is the first time it's been brought to bear against a publication staffed by Israeli Jews and operating within the pre-1967 borders. This prompted Gideon Spiro, also of *Al Hamishmar*, to write: "Whoever thought that it was possible to continue forever in a situation of a military dictatorship for Arabs and democracy for Jews, this week received another blunt hint that it won't work."

B.M.

Perry Anderson: "The Figures of Descent." *New Left Review*, 161 (Jan./Feb. 1987).

Perry Anderson first propounded his theses on Britain's capitalist development in the pages of *New Left Review* in 1964. Fortified by a mixture of old Marxism and new structuralism, Anderson had the confidence to unfold all of modern history like an accordion from a few basic premises. Standing

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Marx on his head, he argued that because capitalism emerged in Britain first, its subsequent development in Britain was not archetypal but exceptional. Britain's "premature" capitalism was sponsored by landlords, not industrialists. Consequently, there was no bourgeois revolution to speak of, and the bourgeoisie developed as a "subaltern" class. This abortion triggered another (the emergence of an equally premature and thus supine proletariat), and another (no Marxist tradition either among the workers or among the alienated intellectuals), and another (a failure to develop organized capitalism in the twentieth century). The result was "the present crisis," the 1960s warning signals of Britain's subsequent economic decline.

For each British failure there was a Continental solution: "pure" capitalists in Germany, "pure" Marxists (both proletarian and intellectual) in France and Italy. As an intellectual, Anderson naturally applied himself to supplying the intellectual deficit, busing into Britain boxloads of Gramsci and Althusser. He showed an interest, too, in importing proletarian Marxism, but found little at hand even across the Channel; his confidence in the ultimate triumph of proletarian Marxism had to be buoyed up by events somewhat further afield, in China, Cuba, and Vietnam.

Although Anderson gave himself over to rectifying the failure of Marxism in Britain, even in 1964 an alternative solution occurred to him: rectifying the failure of capitalism. Accordingly, he offered his program for economic dynamism to "the dominant bloc" as well as to the socialist movement. Over the last twenty years, the socialist movement has disappointed him: the substitute proletariats overseas have ceased to agitate, Continental Marxism has dissipated, the British labor movement has fallen short. In contrast, British capitalism has seemed to listen more attentively. Indeed, the right wing of the Conservative party was thinking along precisely the same lines as Anderson in the mid-to-late 1960s. Margaret Thatcher's mentor, Sir Keith Joseph, had also complained about Britain's historical inability to develop "a capitalist ruling class . . . a stable bourgeoisie" and since 1979 he and his fellow Conservatives have had an opportunity to do something about it.

Perhaps, then, it is not surprising that, in his latest restatement of the "*New Left Review* theses," Anderson now directs the bulk of his prescriptive comments to the right. What Britain needs now, more even than in 1964, is "a centralizing force capable of regulating and counteracting the spontaneous molecular movements of the market": either a strong bureaucracy (as in France) or strong investment banks (as in Germany) or both (as in Japan). These prescriptions are sensible enough: the only question is, what the hell are they doing in *New Left Review*? Why not the *Wall Street Journal*, where fellow *NLR* editor Alexander Cockburn has already found a comfortable berth?

PETER MANDLER □

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Joseph Clark

Castro's Cuba: Lost Illusions

FIDEL: A CRITICAL PORTRAIT, by Tad Szulc. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1986. 653 pp. $19.95.

AGAINST ALL HOPE: THE PRISON MEMOIRS OF ARMANDO VALLADARES. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986. $18.95.

How times have changed. Many years ago Marx and Engels concluded their *Manifesto* with the defiant affirmation: "The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained. . . ." But now, concealing your "views and aims" has been proclaimed as both virtue and necessity, if you happen to be serious about revolution as your profession.

Tad Szulc's recent book painstakingly traces the Communist ties assumed secretly by Fidel Castro when he came to power and the subsequent rationalizations for his deceptions. In a review of the book in the *Nation* (January 24, 1987), George Black belabors Szulc for presenting these disclosures as if they were new—especially the "secret government" set up by Castro after the revolution. Old stuff, Black argues. He points out that "one of the more revealing explanations of the logic of deceit comes from the Communist party leader Blas Roca." Explaining the "secret government" Castro organized in 1959, when he was still officially "democratic," Black quotes Blas Roca approvingly: "Castro's Marxism was hidden (even from the rank and file of the Communist party) because of 'the need of preventing the Americans from having a banner for intervention.' "

Whose fault, then, was the deceit? America's arrogance, Black argues, made Latin Americans "agree with Castro that deceit is the only logical way to deal with us." Black hardly takes into account the recent widespread rejection of dictatorship and support for democracy in Latin America. And it was precisely the predilection of the Cuban people for democracy that led Castro to become an adherent of the *Partido Ortodoxo* of Eddy Chibas as he was rallying the Cubans to overthrow the Batista dictatorship. Came Castro's communism and with it familiar apologetics; the omelet, you know, can't be prepared without breaking eggs.

When hope receded even among the naive about the promised free elections after a year, five years, fifteen years, twenty years of Castro's rule, we began to hear other rationalizations: Although democracy has been forgone, observe the economic advances and well-being of the people. Yet here we are, twenty-eight years after Castro came to power, and almost all his recent speeches deal with economic failures. In a speech on September 28, 1986 Castro says: "There are difficulties, there are economic difficulties, and I think that revolutionaries must be prepared for the good times and for the bad!"

Communist regimes usually oscillate between emphasis on material rewards for work and so-called moral incentives to spur workers to faster and better production. When goods are in short supply and the regime is determined to keep civilian consumption low, it's a pretty good bet that the people will be inundated with appeals for harder work so that the future will be better served. At a time when even the Soviets are placing more reliance on material incentives and greater decentralization, Castro has returned to the ideology of his late comrade Che Guevara, who always condemned thoughts of higher wages and more consumer goods as a reward for harder work. In his speech last September Castro asked: "Is it that the

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Revolution doesn't want workers to have better and better living conditions and doesn't strive for this?" The answer:

> We struggle against the deceit of living in the clouds, the deceit of thinking that we can swim in money without a material counterpart to all that money. The worker himself is the first one to be deceived since he is given money, he's virtually bought with money, with paper, and money is thus made into paper.
>
> Of course when we must set things straight there are difficulties, because it's unfortunate if we're talking about a worker (and not some shady dealer) who works at his machine and makes an effort; it's just that right now the Revolution is not able to provide a counterpart to that effort in money because there is no counterpart in goods, and then we run into all these problems we've been talking about.

Castro attributed some of his economic setbacks to the fall in the price of sugar and a drop of one-and-a-quarter million tons in sugar production last year. He didn't add that Cuba has become more vulnerable to fluctuations in sugar prices because it has become more subject to the monoculture of sugar. Once that was attributed to imperialism. Now that it is a result of what the Soviet fatherland calls the "worldwide socialist division of labor," Castro blames the hurricanes and drought for his difficulties, along with speculation, malingering, poor job performance, lumpen elements, dishonest accounting, misguided youngsters, petty traders, stealing of raw materials, crime, and delinquency. So, there was loud applause when Castro said that 3,000 additional men have been added to the police force in Havana and the military forces have been expanded.

Amid all the economic chaos Castro described there was one boast that surpassed all others:

> Perhaps, when the history of this period is written, the greatest merit of all, amidst all these dangers, will be that we didn't withdraw a single soldier from Angola, or anywhere else, to increase our defense capability. . . . And not only that: at times we even reinforced our troops abroad.

For a few years, following the example of other communist countries, Castro allowed some free-market sale of agricultural products. After all, the most productive agriculture in the Soviet Union was located on tiny private plots that collective peasants were permitted to cultivate. In China and Hungary there was marked improvement of food production and consumption when farmers were given back their land and permitted to sell to the populace. Came the sharp fall of sugar production and the general crisis of Cuba's economy in 1986 and Castro thundered against "a peasant planting a little of anything and earning tens of thousands of pesos, peasants who don't sell anything to the state but instead sell all their produce in the free-market at exorbitant prices."

IN THAT SAME SPEECH Castro made it clear that the free-market portion of the farm economy produced "less than two percent of the supplies received by the population." Castro went on to say that almost all of the agricultural production in Cuba comes from collective and state farms. Nevertheless, he blamed the shortages and troubled times on the tiny portion devoted to the free market. Castro concluded, "We should never have started that strange experiment [the free market] here." How did that minuscule tail of a free market wag that huge state and collective farm economy? Castro's sole explanation was that "The cooperative movement was being held back by all this shady market business." Castro promised still greater centralization of the economy. And since it's always useful to cite the experience of other communist societies, the Cuban leader found a shining example:

> There are countries like Bulgaria that do not have free peasant markets and never did. We who have copied things many times and who . . . have copied bad things well and good things badly, could have at least copied that from the Bulgarians and never have introduced the free peasant market here.

Castro found as little cause for celebration in the state-owned industrial sector as in agriculture. Addressing Cuban trade union functionaries on January 14 of this year, Castro said, after many years of reporting progress, that rather than being overcome, problems were "getting worse." For example, one dam construction project had been cited as allegedly making a 500,000-peso contribution to the economy. But the dam wasn't built till twenty years later.

Castro asked: "Is taking sixty-five years to build a highway building socialism? Is taking twenty years to build a dam building socialism? Is taking twenty-one years to build a hydrotherapy room building socialism?" Castro gave all those horrendous examples and then said: "[N]ow we're really going to build socialism." The report does *not* show the word "laughter" after that declaration.

Well now, whom do you blame for the economic chaos after twenty-eight years of Communist rule? Certainly not the party, since its vanguard role must always be reasserted. Not the people, since "the masses always understand." "However, a bureaucrat, once he has solved his own problems, doesn't care about anything else, whether or not a

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day-care center is opened, and it may seem marvelous to him that with the need for day-care centers in the City of Havana, six or eight of them are built in five years." Castro now warmed to the subject of the bureaucrat's responsibility:

> A bureaucrat with a good home may not care about the fact that hundreds of thousands of people are living in run-down housing and tens of thousands of people are living in inhospitable quarters, and he may care very little that 4,500 to 5,000 new homes were being built annually in Havana during the last few years.

Lest his listeners get the impression that any real progress is being made in housing, Castro goes on to explain that "a portion of these housing units had to be logically awarded to armed forces officers who are carrying out difficult missions abroad. . . ." How many are left for workers? Castro answers, 4,000. But then "more than 4,000 homes deteriorate each year," so there has been a net decline in the supply of homes for the workers of Havana!

The answer to the problem is "political and ideological work."

Castro asks the workers to learn from soldiers, doctors, and teachers, because they can't link their wages to the duties they perform. "If we don't forget the role of the party, the role of awareness, of education and revolutionary ethics, some day we will have many more people working in a different frame of mind as our soldiers, doctors, and teachers are doing," Castro said.

Whether the emphasis was on "moral" or material incentives in the years since the revolution, what characterizes the record from 1959 to the present is that Castro has guided Cuba through every phase and every experience of Soviet communism. The problems that prevent Cuban workers from getting a decent return for their labor are problems that derive from the economics that failed so drastically in every communist country. So too, with the other and darker side of the communist experience—freedom suppressed, art and culture in a straitjacket. In this respect a recent book by Armando Valladares, who was a Prisoner of Conscience in Castro's jails for twenty-two years, reveals the extent to which Cuba's maximum leader has been writing a shameful chapter of human rights abuse.

If nothing else, the Szulc and Valladares books show that Castro learned some perverse lessons from his own experience in Batista's jails. After organizing the armed assault on the Moncada barracks in July 1953, in which nineteen soldiers and police were killed and twenty-seven wounded, Castro was captured, tried, and given a fifteen-year sentence. An amnesty campaign swept Cuba and he was released after serving less than two years. The lesson Castro drew from that is that a dictator cannot deal so leniently with serious opponents.

The man who had used prison for organizing revolutionary cadres also learned that to be effective prisons must become places of horror. The mistreatment and tortures suffered by Valladares and others when they refused to accept the political "conversion" Castro offered them, are the harsh lessons Castro learned from his gentler experience under Batista the butcher.

Valladares's original sentence of thirty years was reduced to twenty-two following a worldwide campaign that threw pitiless light on the hideous conditions in Castro's jails. President Mitterrand of France and socialists and leftists throughout the world brought pressure to release this poet. He became the best-known of Amnesty International's (AI) Prisoners of Conscience. But to Alexander Cockburn in the *Nation,* Valladares had to be plotting a bomb campaign against the Castro revolution (September 20, 1986). Above all, Cockburn condemns the "propaganda campaign against Cuba" and especially "the commotion over Valladares" that brought him out of Castro's jail.

In this connection Amnesty International's report on "Political Imprisonment in Cuba" (November 1986) is a model of careful research. Starting with the early years of the Revolution, AI describes summary procedures against political opponents. Hundreds were executed. Prison sentences were "often as much as sixty or ninety years." In the 1970s penalties were modified to twenty- or thirty-year sentences. In 1978-79, 4,000 political prisoners were released, but many who refused to renounce their views were kept in jail beyond their sentences.

Current estimates of the number of political prisoners range from several hundred to several thousand, according to AI. Although prison conditions are improved for those who accept Castro's "rehabilitation program," the *plantados* (those who stand firm) are often denied visits, correspondence, medical care, fresh air, etc. Prisoners report beatings and long confinements in punishment cells. "Many of the long-term *plantados*, most of whom have spent at least fifteen or twenty years in prison, are reported to be suffering from serious illnesses," the report says.

What are the transgressions for which Cubans can be imprisoned? According to Article 108 of the Cuban Penal Code, anyone who "incites against

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social order, international solidarity, or the Socialist State, by means of oral, written, or any other kind of propaganda" or "prepares, distributes, or possesses" such propaganda, faces imprisonment for between one and eight years. If such activities are carried out via the mass media the penalty is between seven and fifteen years' imprisonment.

Who goes to jail under that dragnet law? One of AI's Prisoners of Conscience is forty-one-year-old Ariel Hidalgo Guillen, a writer and academic sentenced to eight years' imprisonment under Article 108.1. Testimony was brought against him by the local Committee for Defense of the Revolution (CDR). (These notorious committees have been cited as examples of "grass roots democracy," but in their role as informers they are widely known and feared.) The writer's local CDR said at his trial that "he talked too much." But Amnesty International cites a more weighty example of criminality: "an unpublished manuscript entitled *Cuba, the Marxist State and the New Class: a Dialectical Materialist Study,* which the police reportedly found when they searched his home before the trial."

Another of Amnesty International's Prisoners of Conscience, Andres José Solares Teseiro, was charged with "enemy propaganda" and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment. The specific "criminal act"? He had drafted (not actually mailed) several letters to François Mitterrand and Edward Kennedy asking their advice on how to form a new political party, one which he would call the Cuban Revolutionary Party. Amnesty International reports that he is allowed one visit every six months from his wife and is not allowed to send or receive letters.

TAD SZULC IS NOT AN AUTHOR TO DENY CASTRO the benefit of doubt. He reminds us constantly of Castro's brilliance and his ability to dazzle those who listen to him. Yet what emerges from his book is that Castro deliberately deceived the people as to his "views and aims" when he promised them free political parties, free speech, free elections, and land to the peasants. He reveals that while independence fired the zeal of Cuban revolutionaries throughout history, Castro tied his police and secret services to the Soviet KGB. The revolution in 1959 was aimed against the brutalities of the Batista regime, but as Szulc demonstrates, torture was an institutionalized part of the Cuban penal system at least into the 1970s. Furthermore, writes Szulc: "The traditional Western concept of cultural liberty was erased by the Castro revolution." The regime dictates what can be written or painted, the rule being that it must be "within the revolution," and the regime decides what's in or out.

To this day illusions about Castro's regime survive among certain "leftists" who long ago gave up on the European and Asian communist countries. Perhaps our country's support of such dictators as Batista, Somoza, Pinochet, and many others, instead of encouraging the democratic alternative in Latin America, has helped many to keep their blinders about Castro's Cuba. So, while most of Latin America yearns for and moves toward democracy against terrible odds, the prospect is bleak for the Cuban people. □

Fred Block

Unemployment in Advanced Capitalism

WHY SOME PEOPLES ARE MORE UNEMPLOYED THAN OTHERS, by Goran Therborn. London: Verso Books, 1986. 160 pp. $8.95 paper.

For much of the post-World War II period, the United States routinely had rates of unemployment higher than those in Western Europe. This pattern has been reversed in the 1980s; in 1984, the U.S. suffered with 7.4 percent unemployment—hardly an impressive figure for what was supposed to be a year of great economic expansion. However, all of the major countries of Western Europe—the United Kingdom, West Germany, France, and Italy—had even higher rates of unemployment. In Belgium and the Netherlands unemployment was almost double the American rate at levels of 14 percent. (These are standardized data from Therborn.) This dramatic reversal poses a significant intellectual puzzle, since one would imagine that the greater strength of the labor movement and leftist parties in Western Europe would militate against such high rates of unemployment.

This puzzle is one of many that Goran Therborn addresses in a book that attempts to explain the dramatic differences in unemployment levels

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among the developed capitalist countries. Therborn is a Swedish sociologist now teaching in the Netherlands who established his reputation as a thinker strongly influenced by Althusserian Marxism. But the present book represents a break with that tradition; it begins with the premise that the laws of motion of capitalism tell us nothing about why unemployment is 14 percent in the Netherlands and only 1 percent in Switzerland. Therborn seeks to explain this difference in terms of political variables, and his book can easily be read as a defense of Swedish social democratic reformism.

Therborn begins by comparing the standardized unemployment data for fifteen developed capitalist countries, which he divides among high-, medium-, and low-unemployment countries. The five low-unemployment countries are Austria, Japan, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland—all of which have been successful in keeping their unemployment levels below 5 percent. He then analyzes data to find whether a number of economic variables—the rate of economic growth, the growth of the labor force, the cost of labor, or the rates of taxation—explain the variations among the fifteen countries. These data allow him to debunk the standard conservative arguments that excessive social welfare spending leads to higher unemployment. The broader conclusion he draws is that one must look to national variations in politics to explain the differences in unemployment.

THIS IS FOLLOWED by a fascinating and too brief chapter that traces out differences in the ways that countries distribute employment and unemployment. Therborn examines such variables as the number of foreign workers, the number of hours in a full-time job, the amount of part-time work, and the extent of women's labor force participation. The significant variations across countries on these variables sometimes connect to unemployment trends in surprising ways; in full-employment Sweden, 76.6 percent of women were in the labor force in 1983, while in the Netherlands with high unemployment the comparable figure was 38.7 percent. There is also a short but provocative discussion of how different countries rely to differing degrees on the public or private sector to produce service-sector employment. Therborn also shows the contrast between countries like England where unemployment falls disproportionately on male workers and Italy where women and young people bear most of the unemployment burden. This chapter is extremely effective in conveying the idea that there is no simple relationship between economic dynamics and unemployment rates; capitalist societies have an extraordinary range of choices in distributing work.

Therborn goes on to argue that the key explanation for the successes of the low-employment countries is that they have all had a strongly institutionalized political commitment to full employment. In Norway and Sweden, this has been rooted in the strength of social democracy, while in Switzerland and Japan, it can be traced to a conservative paternalistic tradition. Austria represents a peculiar combination of the two. Although the motives differ, so too do the institutional mechanisms that have been used to maintain full employment in these five countries; for example, Switzerland has emphasized restricting access to the labor market by women and foreigners; Norway has made substantial use of public subsidies to private employers; and Sweden has relied on public works and vocational training. But the central point is that the medium- and high-unemployment countries have either lacked or abandoned an institutionalized commitment to maintaining full employment.

Therborn's argument is valuable in challenging claims that high levels of unemployment are economically inevitable in this historical period. By tracing out the number of variables that intervene between economic dynamics and rates of unemployment, he shows that governments have a variety of different policy options available for influencing unemployment and that many of these can be used without dire economic consequences. He is utterly persuasive in showing that governments have more freedom of maneuver in employment policy than is generally acknowledged.

YET THE OVERALL ARGUMENT is still not persuasive. First, there is an element of circularity in his discovery that the low-unemployment countries have an institutionalized commitment to full employment. If Austria, for example, finds its unemployment rate rising above 5 percent as state-owned firms are forced to carry out large layoffs, will that be because Austria's institutionalized commitment evaporated? Since Therborn describes England as a country that abandoned an earlier institutional commitment to full employment, there is a certain vagueness as to what constitutes a commitment.

Second, Therborn abandons his statistical analysis too quickly; his correlations suggest factors that are worth examining more closely. He finds that for the fifteen countries, the rate of growth of service-sector employment explains 28 percent of the variance in unemployment growth. While Therborn dismisses this as a weak finding, it is actually quite

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dramatic given the number of variables that influence unemployment rates. It is striking, for example, that high-unemployment England experienced a 0.7 percent annual growth of service-sector employment from 1975 to 1982, while high-employment Norway experienced a 3.6 annual rate of service-sector growth. Since Therborn also shows that for all fifteen countries, the number of manufacturing employees had dropped an average of 12 percent from 1975 to 1983, there is good reason to understand the unemployment of the 1980s as connected to the transition from industrial to postindustrial society.

This avoidance of the issue of postindustrialism is linked to a third problem—the tenuous connections between the empirical analysis and Therborn's political conclusions. Therborn's argument is that the successes of the low-unemployment countries can be copied if a revitalized labor movement mobilizes for full employment. Even though he recognizes that reforms that create an institutionalized commitment to full employment fall far short of socialism, he suggests that these reforms could bring socialism closer. He writes: "As long as a large part of the [potential] working class is unemployed and marginalized, no further advances are likely. People on the dole will not bring about socialism." Although the first sentence is a perfectly reasonable defense of reformism, the second is an attack on political currents in Holland, West Germany, and elsewhere in Europe that favor struggles for a citizen's wage as a response to the crisis of unemployment.

These Greenish currents have developed sophisticated arguments as to why a system of guaranteed income is a strategy preferable to the left's traditional emphasis on full employment. They emphasize, in particular, the potential that a citizen's wage has for subsidizing a dramatic expansion of voluntary, community-oriented activities. But Therborn does not engage these arguments; he relies instead on an unexamined piece of Marxist dogma—that only employed workers are capable of struggling for socialism. His hostility to the citizen's wage idea is inconsistent with his own data, which show that in developed capitalist societies a reasonable standard of living can be achieved for everyone even when a large percentage of adults are not engaged in wage labor. Moreover, his own comparative research highlights the range of choices as to how work and leisure can be organized and distributed. This emphasis cuts against his advocacy of full employment as the one correct political strategy in all developed capitalist countries. □

David J. Garrow

Hoover's FBI

SECRECY AND POWER: THE LIFE OF J. EDGAR HOOVER, by Richard Gid Powers. New York: The Free Press. 624 pp. $27.95.

Richard Powers's valuable and well-balanced biography of Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover reminds us of the two foremost themes that any analysis of the FBI's role in twentieth-century American politics must confront: how the Bureau's biases generally reflected the opinions and preferences of many Americans, and how the Bureau regularly acted, even in its worst abuses of power, not as an independent "rogue elephant," but as a direct agent of various presidents.

Much of the historical and legal commentary on Hoover's FBI has sought to ignore those two facts. Perhaps analysts hoped that picturing the FBI's political crusades and dirty tricks as the quasi-covert actions of a small, semiconspiratorial band centered around the idiosyncratic Hoover would make that legacy far less troubling than if Hoover's close ties with his political superiors and great popularity with many Americans were fully remembered. Indeed, only a frank recounting of the extent to which American popular opinion hated Hoover's chosen enemies will allow for a history that *explains* Hoover's powerful forty-eight-year reign.

Powers's book is forthrightly explanatory rather than denunciatory, and does not shy from praising Hoover's organizational skills during his first two decades as director of the FBI. Although Hoover's role as a young Justice Department attorney assisting Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer with the 1919-1920 antiradical raids has been revealed previously, Powers does an excellent job describing how the twenty-five-year-old Hoover, given administrative charge of the anti-red drive almost by happenstance, became in a few months "one of the more powerful men in Washington," someone who with a stroke of the pen could determine which alien leftists would be deported and which would not.

Powers appreciates the mixture of lessons Hoover drew from his heady role. Most important of all was a lesson of caution: antiradical initiatives could

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not successfully be expanded beyond whatever limits the popular consensus would support. Once the excesses of many of Palmer's over-eager local or vigilante collaborators were revealed, enthusiasm for him and his raids quickly drained away. A fortunate Hoover, saved from the political backlash by his relatively low-profile role, stayed on to become head of the Bureau of Investigation's General Intelligence Division as the Harding administration took office.

Just as he learned from and survived the Palmer era, Hoover also benefited from the scandals that rocked Harding's Justice Department. When, in May 1924, newly installed Attorney General Harlan Fiske Stone needed a trustworthy department veteran to take charge of the heavily troubled Bureau, Hoover again was there. Convinced that serious professionalism and scientific means of crime-solving could succeed where partisan amateurs had failed, Hoover set about a reconstruction of the Justice Department's investigatory arm. He molded the Bureau of Investigation into a first-rate, professional criminal-justice organization which largely eschewed the ideologically motivated investigations of the pre-1924 era.

Then, in 1935-1936, there occurred the two most significant developments in FBI history. The first and most important was America's newfound fascination with, on the one hand, criminals and crime-fighting, the Dillingers and Al Capones, and, on the other hand, what Powers, in an excellent previous book (*G-Men: Hoover's FBI in American Popular Culture*), termed "the cult of the detective hero." One result of that cult was a new popular-culture celebration of the Bureau's work. Press coverage made Hoover into "a major celebrity, a media star," and James Cagney's *G-Men* movie, Powers reports, "turned Hoover and his Bureau into American legends.... After *G-Men*, the popular image of the FBI changed from a conventional government agency... to a direct expression of the public's wrath against its enemies."

THE NEW POPULAR CELEBRATION of the FBI men as heroic defenders of American social virtue gave Hoover a public fame totally unlike that enjoyed by any other federal bureaucrat, then or since. The other source of Hoover's greatly expanded mandate was President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who convinced Hoover that the FBI not only should target American enemies, but could also provide more personal and political information to the president himself.

Between 1936 and 1940 Roosevelt put Hoover and the FBI back into the ideologically based "domestic intelligence" work that had largely been forsaken in 1924, and on a scale that quickly exceeded that of the Palmer-Harding years. From a staff of 391 agents in 1933, Hoover's FBI grew to 898 in 1940 and 4,886 in 1944 as the Bureau turned its energies against suspected German sympathizers and potential Nazi saboteurs. More important, Hoover grew personally and politically close to FDR, and transformed the FBI into an arm of the presidency in a way that had dramatic consequences for American politics and constitutional liberties.

Hoover's vastly expanded intelligence portfolio covered the left as well as the right, and "was precisely what Roosevelt intended," Powers stresses. "It is FDR... who has to bear the final responsibility for removing all effective restraints from Hoover's surveillance of the American political scene." Not only had the FBI become "a political police force operating at the beck and call of the president," but "the personal relationship between Hoover and Roosevelt erased any limit set by law or custom to the requests the president might make of the FBI director." Hoover, Powers concludes, was "Roosevelt's effective, loyal, and indispensable agent."

THROUGHOUT THE POST-1945 YEARS, and especially in the period after 1961, when William C. Sullivan became assistant director in charge of the Bureau's domestic intelligence division, internal security and "subversive control" dominated the FBI's work. For Hoover personally, the following years witnessed not only a continuing willingness to serve the president of the moment (interrupted only by a serious estrangement from Harry Truman and minor strains with John Kennedy), but also an increasingly explicit articulation of how the FBI's mission went beyond crime, politics, and ideology to "higher" considerations of morality. As Powers puts it, there were always two sides to "Hoover's public role: the domestic-security professional... and the moralist who was always prone to turn his operations into dramatizations of right and wrong." Hoover's moralizing came out most visibly in the Bureau's ideological crusades and COINTELPRO dirty tricks of the 1956-1972 period.

Powers stresses a birth-to-death emphasis on Hoover's cultural roots as the major organizing theme of this book. Until the age of 43, in 1938, when his mother died, Hoover lived in the house in which he was born. He always retained "a turn-of-the-century vision of America as a small community of like-minded neighbors" and understood himself as "an aggressive defender of traditional

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values and customs," someone who saw police officials as "guardians of civilization" and who increasingly viewed crime and political dissent as threats to the nation's moral order.

Thus for Hoover, and for many of the men who worked for him, the FBI became not simply a law enforcement agency, but both a political and a moral guardian of society's "traditional" values. It is in this light that Hoover's lifelong obsession with communism, even after the political demise of the Communist party, needs to be understood. As Powers puts it, "For Hoover, the specter of communism was more than the shadow of the real-life Communist. . . . Anticommunism had a positive value as a defense of American values whether or not there still were any Communists."

While Powers accurately portrays the cultural roots of Hoover's biases, he also points out how the Bureau's worst abuses of political freedoms, individual liberties, and even personal safety were targeted against those whom the wider society despised. The FBI's most heinous crimes, he rightfully notes, "were merely part of very highly publicized campaigns in pursuit of goals supported by the overwhelming majority of the public, the legal establishment, and the governing elite." Powers concludes, with no little irony, that "the critical achievements of Hoover's career . . . were not secret at all."

David Rosner

Safety on the Job

LIBERALISM AT WORK: THE RISE AND FALL OF OSHA, by Charles Noble. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 292 pp.

During the waning years of the nineteenth century, American workers experienced changes in production methods that proved disastrous to their lives and health. The growth of the factory system and mass production, combined with a nearly total lack of regulation and control, created extremely unhealthy and dangerous work sites. Millions of workers were injured, poisoned, killed on the job as new factories brought workers into contact with a host of dangerous processes. Railroad, construction and steel workers, and miners were the most endangered, experiencing death rates often twice and three times those of their European counterparts. In New York, for example, it was estimated that one man lost his life for every floor built in the various skyscrapers put up between 1890 and 1920.

Workers had little legal protection from the hazards of the workplace. First, if a worker was injured, the legal system limited his ability to gain compensation under the doctrines of fellow-servant, contributory negligence, and assumed risk. The first two doctrines put the burden upon the worker to prove that the employer was at fault and that neither the worker himself nor another employee could be held culpable. The doctrine of assumed risk posited that even if the employee could show that the employer had maintained a dangerous workplace, employees were not automatically entitled to compensation if they had knowingly and freely "assumed the risks" by taking the job in the first place. Catch-22.

In the early part of the twentieth century, the workmen's (now workers') compensation program, a state-organized system of insurance for injuries on the job, developed out of a growing alliance among progressive reformers, some business interests, and even the work force. Workmen's compensation allowed business to be freed from the unpredictability of the jury system as injured workers began to win large settlements. For the laborer, it guaranteed payment for injuries on the job without the danger of losing a jury trial and the legal costs associated with the liability system. At the same time, the only method of protecting workers was a haphazard system of factory inspection carried on by state departments of labor.

In the years after the Progressive era, management began the first of a number of attempts to regain control over the reform effort. Through such agencies as the National Safety Council, the radical elements in the earlier coalition were sidetracked as safety standards and control passed on to industry spokespeople and academics who did their bidding. Government itself was relatively quiet during the 1920s. Only later and briefly did it become more involved in protecting the work force through programs organized by Frances Perkins, secretary of labor during the New Deal. Organized labor, especially in the cold war years, allowed its goals to become narrowly focused on bread-and-butter issues as accords were reached that conceded workplace control to management in return for higher wages and shorter hours.

It was not until the late 1960s that the tentative accords reached between government, manage-

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ment, and labor began to unravel in the face of social protest movements, a new environmental consciousness, and dramatically rising accident rates brought on by the speedups associated with Vietnam War production. The United Mine Workers pressed for a mine safety act that was passed in 1969, and in 1970 organized labor won a major victory with the passage of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Hailed at the time as labor's first significant legislative victory since the New Deal, this act mandated that two government agencies be established: the first, located in the Department of Labor, was the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), responsible for the regulation and enforcement of safety and health standards at the work site. Its power was based on its ability to enter the workplace and enforce standards relating to chemical and dust exposure and other safety problems. The second, organized through the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, was the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, which set standards of exposure to toxins in the workplace.

This very interesting book by Charles Noble traces the rise and decline of the first of these agencies. As Noble tells the story, its failure was the product of this long and harrowing history of changing relationships between government, industry, labor, and reformers. Historically, government reformers continually failed to build a strong labor constituency, often relying on the older patterns of factory inspection and the police power of the state to ensure workplace safety. Because of the liberals' fear of true labor involvement, government reform found itself without an involved constituency willing to fight against the attacks of industry.

Noble finds that it was the managers' resistance to government involvement in shop floor practices and their concerted attempt to undermine the ideological and social base of the OSH Act that ultimately spelled its doom. In the 1970s industry began joint efforts to reverse public views of the value of controlling workplace dangers. Using the rhetoric of economic efficiency and free-market ideals, management spokespeople and their academic colleagues organized a campaign to link governmental regulation to America's economic crises of the 1970s. By shifting public scrutiny away from mismanagement and toward regulation as the cause of the nation's economic woes, industry gutted the radical elements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, leaving in place an agency open to ridicule and criticism from the public, management, and work force alike. Reagan appointed Thorne Auchter, a political hatchet man, as OSHA head, and Auchter signaled private industry, state governments, and OSHA officials not to worry about factory inspections, fines, strict standards, or enforcement. By the early 1980s the agency had ceased to be a serious threat to management hegemony over the workplace.

The crux of Noble's argument rests on his examination of "liberal reform." For Noble, the twin pillars of liberal reform are the overwhelming reliance on the state to regulate private industry and the parallel avoidance of true worker control over the shop floor. Because it relied on professionals, voluntary efforts, and inspection to address the problem, the OSH Act was doomed to failure. A really effective and meaningful reform would have vested power in the hands of the work force itself. Liberal dependence on government as the mediator between management and labor left OSHA subject to attack by corporate actors all-too-ready to point out its inherent weaknesses.

Explicit in his analysis is a somewhat condescending tone that condemns the liberal originators of OSHA for not being able to get beyond their class bias and liberal agendas. Although he is right in seeing the weaknesses in the Act, we must remember that the Act was radical even in the context of liberal reform. It was developed with the help of some of the more progressive people in the labor movement, including Tony Mazzochi of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers. Without a true base of support in organized labor, it is difficult to see how any stronger action could have been developed, and in the context of Reagan's America, we might be grateful to those liberal reformers for even this temporarily decapitated agency. The existence of OSHA has brought the issue of workers' health to the attention of a wide variety of activists and professionals.

Near the end of his book, Noble quotes a remark made by Reagan shortly before his election in 1980. From it we can see what lay ahead for OSHA:

> My idea of an OSHA would be if government set up an agency that would do research and study how things could be improved, and industry could . . . say, we have a problem here and seem to lose more people by accidents in this particular function. Would you come look at our plant, and then come back and give us a survey? (*Washington Post*, June 5, 1980.)

It would be tempting to read this as the illiterate ravings of a president who would eventually bring us Contragate. Yet, as this book illustrates, the president's message reflected a long history that has been slowly killing American workers. □

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LETTERS

Rank-and-File Attitudes

Editors:

Robert Kuttner thankfully does not attribute all of labor's ills to external factors as so many do; instead, he reveals some of the internal problems unions must overcome if organizing is to become a real priority in the labor movement.

I disagree, however, with his focus on union leadership—officers *and* organizers—as the primary players in unions' organizing successes. He excludes from his analysis the role of the rank and file; the attitudes of union members play an important part in any organizing campaign.

Kuttner mentions union leaders' wariness of organizers. Although it is true that many union leaders are fearful of an active membership, I think the challenge posed by aggressive organizers to entrenched leaders is overstated. In my experience, most labor organizers believe in the overriding importance of labor's institutional interests and reserve their radicalism and political activism for the "wider" struggle outside unions, or they prefer to discuss their vanguard role vis-à-vis "the workers" in whichever caucus or line they currently adhere to. In fact, because organizers are fully aware that they have no job security, and are generally unwilling to organize themselves, labor leaders do not find them a threat to their own job security.

Likewise, newly organized members are more occupied with gaining a contract and settling scores with management than in reforming the union. It takes many years of disillusionment for most members to reluctantly take on their own leaders. This may explain why rank-and-file members are not used by unions to organize new union members. . . . Union leaders' paranoia explains this reluctance: they are afraid of stewards and activists from one facility or factory forming alliances with their pre-organized counterparts elsewhere. . . .

Another obstacle to organizing is the problem of internal democratic participation, which Kuttner mentions but never expounds upon. One of the main benefits of unions is their function as a voice for the exploited. If one's voice is stifled in one's own union, how can that collective voice serve effectively for workers against management? Unfortunately, democratic abuses in unions are serious and very difficult to correct. . . .

But the biggest drag on organizing workers is the concessionary bargaining climate in the 1980s. It's tough to organize during these times, and impossible when the unorganized are exposed to unions unwilling or unable to fight against these concessions. It is one thing to be assaulted by management; quite another to be sold down the river by unions too weak, too lazy, too frightened, or too disorganized to mount a credible struggle against concessions. For workers, to lose is bad enough, but never to have made the fight sets the stage to view the unions as in bed with management. Who wants to pay dues money for that?

Union members have a great deal of influence on the labor movement's future. Our efforts and attitudes are vitally important to any future at all for the movement. Therefore, if old members are alienated from their own unions, potential new members will be nearly impossible to organize, no matter how much commitment, money, and organizers unions allocate to their numerical survival.

JOHN MEHRING
San Francisco, Calif. □

Union Membership

Editors:

Robert Kuttner's critique of labor's current perspective on organizing (*Dissent*, Winter 1987) touches too offhandedly on the associate member concept being developed by the AFL-CIO and some affiliates. That concept holds out the possibility of providing labor with increased organizing opportunities, as well as a method of recruiting members, not merely on the job, but as consumers, tenants, citizens, etc.

What the AFL-CIO is doing through a nonprofit corporation, Union Privilege Benefit Plans, is to develop a series of national consumer benefits available to members through their own unions. These include a cut-rate MasterCard (presently charging 12.5% interest), a reduced-fee legal service program, group insurance benefits, a package of financial benefits including money-market funds and individual retirement accounts, travel and lodging discounts, etc. The ability to negotiate for these benefits on behalf of thirteen and a half million AFL-CIO members and their families has provided significant savings.

What is often forgotten is that in an earlier period of American labor history it was benefits such as these, in many cases pioneered by the "social unions" of the needle trades and others, that were a key attraction for union recruiting. Derek Bok and John Dunlop write in *Labor and the American Community*: "So many labor organizations began as benefit societies that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that trade unionism in America arose almost as much from a desire to band together for mutual insurance as from a desire to bargain collectively."

Indeed, before public-sector collective bargaining became possible, many public-sector unions, such as the Teachers and AFSCME, were built on benefit packages. But in the forty years since the end of World War II, successful fringe benefit negotiations by unions

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have made health and retirement benefits part of the collective bargaining process, rather than unilateral union benefits, and unions have lost much of their character as mutual benefit associations.

A return to these concepts through associate member programs in which unions seek to recruit former members, as well as other nonmembers, by offering these types of benefits, plus job and personal counseling services, seems promising.

JULES BERNSTEIN
Washington, D.C. □

Having Us Around

Editors:

For reasons financial, I am not now a subscriber to *Dissent*, but I usually purchase each issue at a magazine or book store, not an easy matter. I live in Marin County, California, an area much publicized with both praise and derision, and previous to last month I knew of no place in the county where I could purchase *Dissent*. Last month I discovered half a dozen copies of *Dissent*, a veritable treasure trove, at the "Newsstand" in Sausalito. As I paid the cashier/owner of the store, praising her for carrying the magazine, I asked her if she sold many copies. "No," she said, and added warmly, "but I like having them around."

I also like having *Dissent* around, and in spite of some of the criticisms which you have frequently heard —"It lacks liveliness," or among some of the active members of the local DSA chapters: "It's too conservative" (meaning it is Social-Democratic and puts too much emphasis on human rights)—there is something inspirational in the magazine's survivability and the dedication of its contributors, who give of themselves in their articles without stint. And always there is a glimmer of fresh insight and critical intellect.

MARK S. WITTENBERG
Mill Valley, Calif. □

King Papers

Editors:

The Martin Luther King Papers, which will be published in twelve volumes under the editorship of Stanford University historian Clayborne Carson, will be the most comprehensive collection of the publications, sermons, speeches, correspondence, photographs, and other documents relating to Martin's role in the civil rights movement.

The editors of the King Papers would be grateful to receive original documents or copies of original documents for possible inclusion in the volumes of the King Papers. For further information, please write: Dr. Clayborne Carson, c/o The Martin Luther King Center, 449 Auburn Ave, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30312, or call: Dr. Ralph E. Luker, assistant editor (404) 526-8982 or Dr. Lillian Ashcraft Eason, assistant editor (404) 526-8984.

CORETTA SCOTT KING
Atlanta, Ga. □

Correction

Because of an editing error, a mistake appeared in Joel Bleifuss's "Spain: Democracy With Difficulties," in the Spring 1987 *Dissent*. A sentence in the article states that "seventeen percent of the Basque population . . . last June voted for Henri Batasuna, candidate of the one nationalist party that refuses to condemn the ETA." The proper spelling of the name is Herri Batasuna—and it's the name, not of any candidate, but of the party itself.

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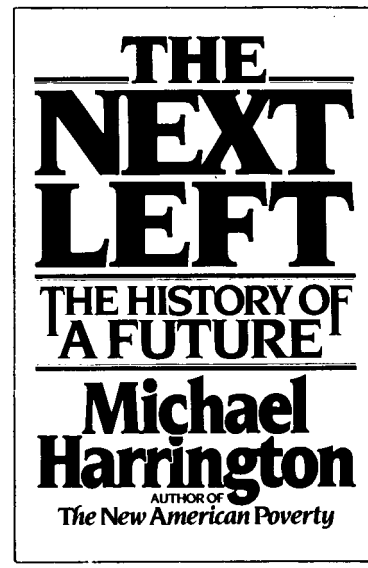

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